

It is said that by counting all 108 pagodas in one breath, one could be completely released from all troubles.
Page 16



The momentum of Korean filmmaking reminds one of the Red Devil cheer squad in the World Cup.
Page 10



"Whenever the elephants came within 5 kilometers, I would immediately stop what I was doing and rush out to see them."
Page 9



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Taizhang village

From Village to Villa

By Dong Nan

Liang Xisen, a 49-year-old Shandong billionaire, has spend 30 million yuan to build over 100 modern villas for the villagers of Liangzhui, his hometown. He has also set out to change the way his fellow villagers live and work. His efforts have won applause and gratitude, but also caused a considerable degree of culture shock.

Beijing Today visited Liangzhui and interviewed Liang Xisen.

A brand new village

Liangzhui was until recently a non-descript village, one of 109 under the administration of Huangjia, a town in the northwest of Shandong Province. According to Liu Jianjun, a local driver, villagers in Huangjia grew corn, wheat and jujube trees, living in simple, one-story buildings made of yellow earth, gray tiles and bricks, in what was one of the most impoverished areas of Shandong.

These days, however, Liangzhui stands out from its neighbors. Around the village, there is a high wall, neatly painted with red lacquer and topped with black glazed tiles. Every family lives in a two-storey villa-style building, with a small yard at the front and another at the back. Each 280-square-meter house has five bedrooms, one living room, two toilets, a kitchen and a balcony, spacious even by big city standards.

According to Liang Guanglu, secretary of Liangzhui village Communist Party Committee, Liang Xisen built

this new village in 2002, and moved all 96 families – 415 people – into it.

Liang says the old village covered an area of 32 hectares. The new one, with its double story houses, covers less than 7 hectares. Liang Xisen used the remaining 25 hectares, plus another 8 hectares of former crop land, to build Luxi Ox Group, a farm with 6,000 head of oxen and an abattoirs.

Luxi Ox Group is right next to Liangzhui, and almost all the villagers work there. Generally, women take charge of looking after the cattle and beef packing, and the men do the slaughtering and processing. They are paid between 600 and 800 yuan a month, much more than the made from planting corn.

The 33 hectares of Luxi Ox Group have been converted into "stock shares," and villages get to share in the profits of Luxi Ox Group every year. 2004 will be the first year for them to receive this "bonus." According to Liang Xisen, every villager will receive around 2,000 yuan.

Culture Shock

However, after the villagers moved into their new homes, some problems arose. Many, especially the older people, could not get used to their modern new lifestyle.

"Many old people were unhappy with the stairs," said Xu, a female villager in her 20s, "since few of them had seen such things before in their lives. They thought they were inconvenient and even dangerous. The solution was for all the old people to live on the ground floor."

68-year-old Shang Jingtian told

Beijing Today that many people were uneasy about all generations sharing the same house. In the old village, different generations lived in different little yards, but now, old men were embarrassed to see their daughters-in-law share the same living room with them. It took them months to understand that every bedroom could be locked from inside and everyone could still enjoy their privacy.

Toilets were another major problem. At first, many complained that they could not use the modern "sit-down" toilets that every house had, and instead went out to the public toilet every day. They started using their new toilets only when Liang Xisen threatened to have the public toilet demolished.

Even now, the villagers retain some of the old habits. In autumn, the roads are covered with dried corn. It comes from the reserve land of the village – according to Liang Guanglu, every villager still has about 260 square meters each to farm.

Outside every house are piles of dried corn stalks and cobs – although there are gas stoves in every kitchen, the villagers burn corn to save money.

A 72-year-old female villager named Shang was sitting among piles of dried corn and corn cobs, turning them over to dry in the sunshine when she spoke to *Beijing Today*.

"I am happy with the new house," she said, "but I enjoy working with the corn as well." She also expressed regret over the loss of those jujube trees in her yard in the old village – autumn should be the time to harvest the jujubes, and she described using poles to knock the ripe fruit from the trees as a great pleasure. Now in the beautiful new village, this little pleasure is gone forever.

Difficulty in development

Despite such problems, Liang Xisen is determined to continue with his ambitious plan, of which Liangzhui is just the first stage. He wants not only to see these villagers living in beautiful houses, but also help them lead a well-off life, like people living in big cities.

Liang's blueprint covers all the villages around Huangjia. He wants to rebuild all 109 villages of Huangjia town, using the excess land to raise more oxen and open more abattoirs.

Not all locals are embracing Liang Xisen's grand vision, however. Villagers at neighboring Maxianliu and Taizhang have resisted his attempts to change their way of life.

Earlier this year, Liang was preparing to rebuild those two villages, following the model of Liangzhui, and both village committees had agreed to his proposals.

However, according to Zhang Junshan of Taizhang village, in March, some villagers found the new houses Liang had planned for them were not as good as those of Liangzhui.

An elderly man at Taizhang who did not reveal his name, told *Beijing Today* that some villagers were worried that Liang Xisen would take advantage of them. "The people of Liangzhui are his local people, but we are not," he said.

They tried to negotiate, and some said they would not move to the new village. Liang reportedly then became angry and had the half-finished walls knocked down. He said later that he would not carry out his plan so long as there was one family that disagreed.

But there are still many willing to accept Liang's offer. Xujia, a village to the south-west of Liangzhui is now being rebuilt. The project is to due be finished next August.



Xinhua Photo

Beijing Keeps Count

By Yu Shanshan

Thousands of US citizens and Chinese crowded into the banquet hall of the Great Wall Hotel Wednesday morning to watch a live broadcast of the vote tally for the US election.

As the count progressed, guests were invited to participate in an informal presidential vote. The deadline was 11 am, and when the results were announced – 117 votes for George W. Bush and 230 for John Kerry, the Kerry supporters broke into loud applause.

The Great Wall Hotel vote, however, is unlikely to be of any consolation to Kerry, who never overtook Bush's lead in electoral college votes. As guests were leaving at around 1 pm, the number stopped temporarily at 203 for Bush and 188 for Kerry, both well short of the magic number of 270. It would be another 10 hours before Kerry declared he would not challenge the count in Ohio, sealing Bush's victory.

Richard H. Lawrence III from Massachusetts, a lawyer with legal firm Garvey Schubert Barer, and Wade D. Wood of Florida, chief engineer at Zachry Corporation's Beijing Representative Office, both voted for Bush and echoed each others opinion when approached by *Beijing Today*, "When two people are equal, you will stick to people who have more experience. Why change?"

A Chinese film producer who gave her name as Lola, confessed she preferred Kerry, "Because he looks warm and tolerant. Though he comes from upper class, at least he has experience in war. For Bush, maybe from a historical point of view, his policy in war has no fault, but I just hate war."

Mei Renyi, director of the American Studies Center at Beijing Foreign Studies University said he always supports Bush. "The reason is simple – for us in China, Bush is a known quantity, we know his personality, which is he'll stick to his own beliefs. So, we'll benefit if he continues with his Iraq policy, which will give us another four-year peaceful time to develop."

The real economic problem for new graduate students in Renmin University's Department of Public Administration was, "The losers of a bet among us must treat the winners to a meal. Even though many of us were for Kerry, 70 percent of the class bet on Bush because we felt sure he'd win," one of students told *Beijing Today* on condition of confidentiality.

An official working at the US embassy in Beijing told *Beijing Today*, "No matter who wins, he is my boss and I'll work for him."

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Corn dries on the road in the new Liangzhui village.

Photos by Dong Nan

By Dong Nan

Beijing Today: How long were you preparing to rebuild Liangzhui and establish Luxi Ox Group, and how did you come up with this idea?

Liang Xisen: I have been thinking this over for more than 10 years. When I opened my first factory in the 1980s, I told my local people that I would build houses for all of them one day, though at that time no one believed my words.

To carry out the plan, our company did a lot of research. Peasants may not be able to make high-tech things such as planes and cannons, and they are sure able to do things like raising cattle.

BT: You took over the land to set up Luxi Ox Group and the villagers are now your labor force. Hasn't the whole exercise been beneficial to you?

Liang: I am a businessman and of course pursue profit. However, as long as I earn money, I can carry out my plan. As long as my group earns money, those peasants can also benefit from it. As to the land, all the peasants in Liangzhui village have shares in my group, I'm the biggest stockholder, and they are little ones.

In fact, if I invested in other places without building such houses for the villagers, I would save some 20 percent of the cost.

BT: So why have you spent so much money to build such expensive houses for the villagers?

Looking After the Neighbors

Interview with Liang Xisen



Liang: I want to do something for my hometown. Of course one cannot live without money. But no matter how rich you are, when you die, you cannot take it with you.

I used to lead a poor life. I used to beg as a child in the 1960s. At that time, I found that most people were kind-hearted and good. Now I've become rich, I hope I can help other poor people.

BT: Are the villagers all happy with your plan, have you met with any resistance?

Liang: I cannot force people to be happy and to understand me. Most peasants are shortsighted and cannot understand my plan. Sometimes I am so unhappy with them that there were so many opportunities to make money, but they are too simple-minded to know how to take advantage of it.

ed to know how to take advantage of it.

It is true that some people in Taizhang and Maxianliu did not accept my plan. Maybe they think it is fine to live in an old house.

There are many other villages, such as Xujia village, that welcome me. After I finished rebuilding other nearby villages, visitors who see those two villages would be able to see how backward the place used to be.

BT: How do you plan to extend your project to include all of Huangjia town? Do you see any risks in doing so?

Liang: I plan for Luxi Ox Group to have 200,000 head of cattle in 15 years, and to rebuild all 109 villages of Huangjia town.

China has a large population and there is a lack of beef. If I earn more money, I'll rebuild more villages. I can't see any risks. Besides, I have bought insurance for the villagers, they have no risks either.

BT: Do you think you have changed the way of thinking and living style of the local villagers?

Liang: Of course! Some old people might not get used to the new life, but young people come to like it very quickly. At least, their ideas of sanitation have improved. I remembered in the past, there was not an ashtray in the whole village, now every family has one. And people put on slippers when they enter the house. More importantly, they know the principle of more pay for more work. They are not lazy anymore.

Audit Reveals 6.9 Billion Embezzled from ICBC

By Sun Yongjian

A National Audit Office report reveals that 6.9 billion yuan has been embezzled from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), one of the big four state-owned banks in China. The report was published Monday on the office's web site.

The audit, which focused on the ICBC's 2002 assets reliability, revealed failings of the bank in its business administration, risk control and financial calculation.

Major problems were also found in some bank branches such as violation of state regulations on loan issue, bill acceptance and discounting. The report said 30 cases had been found and 368 employees had been disciplined.

The problems were identified in five major areas, specifically bill business, municipal construc-

tion loan business, individual consumption business, financial administration and private enterprise loan business, according to the report.

Administration of the bill market was found to be very disordered, with 10.1 billion yuan in bill acceptance and discounting in violation of regulations.

Some enterprises utilized bills as a tool for low cost fund placement. Some firms were found to have engaged in providing fake trade contracts and value-added invoices in local markets, which were used to attract bank capital.

Major problems were also found in the municipal construction loan business resulting from violation of state regulations on loan issuance. Some loans were found to have been directly issued to government departments, some loans

were found to have been improperly guaranteed by local fiscal authorities, and some loans were found to have been issued with insufficient guarantees. Some branches violated state regulations on loan issuance for the purpose of competing for market share.

Regarding individual consumption business, some units and individuals were found to have created fake materials to defraud the bank on loans for vehicles and estates, exploiting the bank's insufficient measures in risk control.

A number of serious problems in financial administration and have been referred to the China Banking Regulatory Commission and the Ministry of Supervision

Certain private enterprises have been found to have defrauded the bank by means of mutual guarantee, causing large

losses in bank capital.

The report cited the example of Meng Lichang, owner of a private enterprise in Foshan, Guangdong, who was found to have defrauded the ICBC's Nanhai branch with 386 loans totaling 7.42 billion yuan since 1996. Of this, over 1 billion yuan had been transferred to his individual account.

The report identified similar problems involving the Ministry of Land and Resources and the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping.

Charges against the Ministry of Land and Resources included the misappropriation of 63 million yuan from a special wage fund, subsidizing non-fiscal appropriation units with 1 million yuan and failure to include over 1 million yuan in fiscal income and expenses in the annual budget.

Olympic Press Center Opens

By Qiu Jiaoning

The Beijing Olympic Press Center was officially opened Monday at the Huabei Hotel.

Jiang Xiaoyu, vice-president of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), said at the opening ceremony, "A successful Olympic Games needs extensive participation and active support from the media. It is an important part of BOCOG's work to provide high-standard service for the media."

Jiang invited journalists from home and abroad to cover Beijing's Olympic preparations and China's rapid development so that people all over the world could have a better understanding of the

country.

The Olympic Press Center is jointly operated by BOCOG's Media and Communication Department and the Press Office of the Beijing Municipal Government. It will provide packaged services to overseas and domestic media for their coverage of BOCOG's preparatory work as well as other tasks undertaken by relevant municipal government agencies.

Regular press conferences and media briefings will be held at the center to ensure the authoritative and systematic release of the Olympics-related information. The center will also organize social gatherings and cultural activities for domestic and overseas journalists.

Private Capital Welcome in Culture Industry

By Dong Xin

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Culture last Friday, private enterprises will be encouraged to invest in China's culture industry.

Xie Rui, vice-director of the ministry's culture industry department, said in the statement that this is the first time the ministry has actively supported investment by non-public enterprises in the culture industry, and that the ministry would implement policies to ensure fair treatment of such enterprises.

Xie also said that the phenomenon of non-public com-

panies developing the culture industry has seen vigorous growth in recent years. Employees in non-public culture related companies now number 1.67 million, and the income generated by these companies is half the total amount.

Regarding the broadcasting and television industry, content production and broadcast are to be further separated. There are many non-public owned companies now involved in the manufacture of TV programs, but the broadcasting of programs remains under the control and guidance of relevant government departments.

Drug Classification to be Completed in 2005

By Pan Hao

The implementation of prescription and non-prescription drug classification will be completed by the end of 2005, according to the State Food and Drug Administration's 2004-2005 work plan.

Pharmacies that pass inspection and are assessed as qualified will be able to continue to supply prescription and non-prescription drugs to the public, while those who fail to qualify will only be allowed to sell non-prescription medicine from 2006.

Zhao Ling, of the administration's news department, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that the classification work had been continuing steadily since 2000. The China Adverse Reaction Reporting center had received 30,000 reports in 2003, 94.7 percent of which

were related to improper usage of prescription drugs.

There are approximately 15,000 types of drugs available in China, 4,300 of which are non-prescription. Zhao also said that currently, prescription and non-prescription drugs are indicated by a colored label system.

Zhang Shuhua, manager of Beijing Triple Nine Huawei pharmacy told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that it is a welcome change to classify prescription and non-prescription drugs, as doing so will help supervise the correct usage of medicine. However he said that to successfully implement the system, several problems need to be solved, such as changing traditional consumer behavioral patterns, and the increasing cost of medical treatment.

Hospitals to Insure against Malpractice

By Dong Xin

Publicly owned hospitals in Beijing are now required to take out insurance for medical treatment responsibility. *Beijing Morning Post* Thursday quoted an official from the Beijing Health Bureau as saying that all non-profit-seeking medical institutions in Beijing should hold such insurance in accordance with an announcement issued by

the Bureau Wednesday.

Malpractice insurance premiums should be calculated according to the scale of the malpractice risk. An insured person may not make a profit from such insurance. Meanwhile medical institutions are not permitted to raise their fees to cover the cost of the insurance, and the insurer should be chosen by public bidding.

Regulations Protect Traditional Arts and Crafts

By Qiu Jiaoning

Regulations aimed at preserving the traditional arts and crafts of Sichuan Province will come into force from December 1, Xinhua reported Sunday.

The regulations stipulate that unique folk skills in traditional arts and crafts will be given support by way of policies and funding. Moreover, such skills should be kept secret and those who disclose the secret will be liable to prosecution.

According to the regulations, handicrafts and skills recognized as the traditional arts and crafts of Sichuan Province should have a history of 100 years or longer; use natural materials; be charac-

terized by a distinctive local style or folk flavor; and enjoy a high level of recognition throughout the country.

Official records list some 100 unique skills of traditional arts and crafts in Sichuan Province. Among these, "facial mask make-up" enjoys great prestige at home and abroad, however is at risk due to improper disclosure of "trade secrets." The new regulations are expected to provide better protection for such arts and crafts.

In addition, a critical appraisal system has been established for masters of arts and crafts. Organizations or individuals are not allowed to make unauthorized use of such master's name.

China-ASEAN Expo Opens in Nanning

By Chu Meng

The four-day China-ASEAN Expo opened Wednesday in Nanning, capital of southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The expo, jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of China, the trade and economic authorities of the ten ASEAN members and the ASEAN Secretariat, is attended by heads of government including Prime Minister Bounnhang of Laos, Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cam-

bodia, Prime Minister Soe Win of Myanmar, as well as Chinese Vice-premier Wu Yi.

A total of 1,505 companies are participating in the expo. Among them, 19 companies are listed on the Fortune Global Top 500.

There will be more than 200 categories of products from 11 sectors presented at the Expo, such as machinery, household electrical appliances, electronic and IT products, and automobiles and spare parts.

Photo by Imaginechina



Development of Farmland Strengthened

By Annie Wei

Premier Wen Jiabao called on government officials at all levels to implement a decision on farmland control in a speech Wednesday.

The decision on furthering the revolution of land management was released by the State Council at a meeting on October 13.

With the aim of protecting farmers' benefits and improving land usage efficiency, the decision requires compensation for land acquisition to be adequate to maintain the living of the person affected, otherwise it should be

topped up from the profits the local government made by transferring it. Also, the social welfare of suburban peasants who have lost their land should be included in the urban social welfare system.

Before the decision, 30 percent of compensation for state-owned land acquisition went to the central government and 70 percent to the local government. In some cases, local governments decreased the compensation and offered their 70 percent to attract investors. Now, all compensation for state-owned land must be handed to the

central government.

The decision requires that any farmland planning changes have to be approved by the State Council, to prevent local government using farmland illegally or wastefully.

Before April, wastage or illegal transfer of farmland was a nationwide problem. To rectify the land market and prevent the economy from over-heating, the State Council put a six-month ban on developing farmland for commercial usage, especially being sold to real estate developers.

However the ban caused other

problems, such as local governments being unable to raise capital by selling farmland to real estate developers to fund the construction of expressways, railways and other basic facilities to connect poorer regions with rich coast cities, according to an article in Guangzhou-based *New Express* last Wednesday. The freeze on farmland development expired at the end of last month.

Experts say the decision is an executive measure, but insufficient in itself to adjust the benefit structure to solve the problem from the root.

China Ranked Second in Energy Consumption

By Qiu Jiaoning

China ranks second in energy consumption in the world, according to a Xinhua report Wednesday.

The report quoted Wu Guihui, director of the Energy Resources Bureau of the National Development and Reform Commission, as saying China accounted for 11 percent of global energy consumption

Wu said the total capacity of energy consumption in China equalled 1.68 billion tons of standard coal in 2003, of which, 67.1 percent was

coal, 22.7 percent rock tar, 2.8 percent natural gas and 7.3 percent reproducible energy.

Wu said that China is now confronted with a number of energy-related problems, such as suffering restraints on conventional sources of energy, too heavy a reliance on pollution causing coal and low efficiency in the utilization of energy resources. Per-capita coal, oil and natural gas use in China are 60 percent, 10 percent and 5 percent respectively of the world average.

Coal burning is responsi-

ble for 90 percent of sulfur dioxide emission and 70 percent of smoke emission throughout the country. Moreover, output efficiency of standard coal per ton in China is only 10.3 percent of that of Japan and 16.8 of that of the EU.

China's future energy strategy will be mapped out in accordance with the rule "developing pluralistically on the basis of coal." The primary energy structure should keep coal as the mainstay with comprehensive development of associated gas.

First Annual Money Laundering Report Released

By Chu Meng

A total of 86 underground foreign exchange transactions with an illegal trading volume \$120 million were investigated during the last financial year.

The transactions were identified in China's first annual report on money laundering released by the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) Tuesday.

The main items of the annual report include money laundering related legislation and the opera-

tional mechanism of foreign exchange; statistical characteristics for large or questionable trade volumes in 2003; and establishment of a domestic information system and international cooperation achievements.

According to a SAFE spokesman, money-laundering refers to methods of making money and benefits from criminal activities appear to come from legal sources by way of transactions, diversions and transfers, so as to evade legal sanctions. Since March

2003, the People's Bank of China has received reports on over 3,000 suspect sums of renminbi examined and cleared by local branches, while the State Bureau for Foreign Exchange Control has investigated sums amounting to US \$9.72 billion.

The first joint inter-ministerial work conference on anti-money laundering was held in May. A draft law on money laundering will be submitted to the Standing Committee of the NPC for discussion at the beginning of 2005.

South-west China Unifies Cigarette Prices

By Annie Wei

Wholesale cigarette prices in south-west China have been unified in a move aimed at consolidating the regional market according to a report in Tuesday's *Beijing News*.

Tobacco administrations in Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Chongqing and Tibet signed an agreement to this effect in Chengdu Monday

In the past, the retail price of cigarettes varied considerably from city to city. Some tobacco vendors took advantage of this situation by purchasing cheaper cigarettes in one place and selling them at a considerable mark up in another, in conflict with official retail channels.

A spokesman from the Chongqing Tobacco Bureau Monopoly Administration was quoted in the article as saying that the move will promote the development of cigarette retail channels and increase the profit margin of retailers, predicting that in Chongqing, retail profit on cigarettes would increase from 8 to 10 percent.

Meanwhile, 26 domestic tobacco companies have gathered in Chongqing to discuss how to set up a national unified market to compete with foreign tobacco companies.

Pending approval by the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration, regional market areas would be established in the north, northeast and west of China, the article said.

Mr. Sun, a section chief of the state administration, who declined to reveal his full name, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that building a consolidated national market is possible, but there remains much more to be done.

Forbes Names China's Wealthiest for 2004

By Sun Yongjian

US-based *Forbes* magazine released its ranking of this country's 200 wealthiest individuals, the 2004 China Rich List, on Thursday in Beijing. The list came out just weeks after the release of a rival ranking by UK-based company EuromoneyChina.

Larry Rong Zhijian, the 61-year-old owner of Citic Pacific, a giant Hong Kong-based enterprise involved in the aviation,

infrastructure, real estate and telecommunication industries, won the top slot with a total personal fortune of \$1.49 billion. Rong ranked third on the EuromoneyChina list.

Second place went to EuromoneyChina's number one, 35-year-old Huang Guangyu, the founder of GoMe Appliances, China largest electronics retailer, with a personal worth of \$1.3 billion. Timothy Chen Tianqiao, 31,

earned third place for his 60 percent stake in online gaming company Shanda Networking, China's largest Nasdaq-listed company by market value.

Forbes' 2004 list was expanded from previous rankings that stopped at 100 names. Some 60 percent of the tycoons in the top 100 this year control listed companies and were worth a total of \$29.2 billion, the magazine said in a press release.

Guangdong Province was home

to 35 of China's wealthiest people, Beijing and Shanghai home to 22 and Zhejiang Province to 20, the release said.

Russell Flannery, president of Forbes Shanghai Branch, said at a press conference for the release of the list that the number of CEOs and owners of listed companies in the rankings was likely to double next year, revealing the increasing influence of private enterprises in China.

Trio of Telecom Heavyweights Swap Senior Managers

By Annie Wei

China's three telecommunications superpowers, China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom exchanged their elite senior management staff on Monday in a move intended to calm overheated competition in the domestic telecom industry in keeping with orders from state authorities, company sources revealed.

China Unicom CEO Wang Jianzhou was named general manager of China Mobile, China Mobile Deputy Director Wang Xiaochu became general manager of China Telecom and China Telecom Deputy Director Chang Xiaobing was made CEO of China Unicom. The

former general managers of China Mobile and China Telecom retired the same day.

In a related move, China Netcom Deputy Director Tian Suning was promoted to be the company's CEO.

Industry analysts were quoted in the *Beijing Morning Post* on Tuesday as saying one of the main purposes of the reshuffling was to keep the fierce competition in the telecom sector from getting any worse. For years, regional branch companies of China Mobile and China Unicom had been locked in fierce economic battles, competing by repeatedly slashing service fees, which in turn negatively affected their reputations and led to the loss of state-owned assets, the newspaper said.

Another reason behind the move was to make sure all four companies, including CNC, would be prepared for the industry's move to higher-tech 3G, or third generation, mobile services, the analysts were quoted as saying.

Many, however, have questioned the feasibility and effectiveness of the dramatic swap. Wang Yuquan, general manager at consulting company Frost & Sullivan (China) told the newspaper that the overheated competition was a result of inadequate regulation rather than top management decisions.

Helen Zhu, an analyst at Netherlands-based ABN Amro Bank said the reshuffling should not affect the three listed companies' business and that the development of the Chinese mainland's telecom industry still depended on supervision and reform from government authorities.



Former China Mobile Deputy Director Wang Xiaochu (center) was named new general manager of China Telecom on Monday.
Photo by Imaginechina

Locally-Made Mercedes to Hit Streets Next July

By Annie Wei

Luxury Mercedes-Benz passenger cars and vans made here in Beijing should be launched next July, following the signing of a cooperation agreement between Germany-based DaimlerChrysler and Beijing Automotive Industry Holding Company (BAIC) last Wednesday.

The news was announced by the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Committee on Monday after the national body approved the feasibility plan for BAIC's second joint venture.

BAIC previously partnered with South Korea's Hyundai Motor.

DaimlerChrysler has also made a deal to manufacture Sprinter vans in a new facility in Fuzhou, Fujian Province with domestic partners Fujian Motor Industry Group and China Motor Corp.

Zhang Yanyou, head of the industry department of the Beijing committee, said at the Monday press conference that 140 million eu-

ros would be initially invested in the project, in which BAIC and DaimlerChrysler would hold equal 50 percent shares, and a joint research center would be set up in the capital.

The joint venture will mainly produces Mercedes E and C-class sedans, available with three different engines, and 20,000 units are scheduled to be produced next year after the new plant, located in the Beijing Development Area, begins operation in mid-2005.

Zhang said the project would promote the development of the technologies, branding and quality of the local automotive industry, and help Beijing achieve a goal of one million cars manufactured with 100 billion yuan in annual sales in 2008.

Though the national tariff on imported cars is set to drop to 25 percent in 2006, the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Committee said they believed Beijing-made Mercedes-Benz cars would be strong players in China's intensely competitive premium car market.

PICC Introduces Deductibles for Auto Insurance

By Sun Yongjian

Domestic insurer PICC Property and Casualty Co. on Monday launched new versions of its vehicle insurance policies that include deductibles, making it the second Chinese insurance company to set such minimums.

When the launch was announced last Friday, PICC said it had set 500 yuan deductibles for family and business vehicle policies, meaning the company would only pick up the costs of repairs of policy-holders' vehicles past 500 yuan.

In its announcement, the insurer said it was implemented a risk index system, meaning that individuals' insurance prices would change in keeping with their driving records.

PICC said it was doing away with nationally unified insurance prices to allow policies to sell for different prices in different areas in keeping with regional economic development discrepancies.

Some consumers have called setting deductibles unreasonable, irresponsible and a unilateral action by the company to shift risk to consumers while reducing the insurer's services, the *Beijing News* reported on Tuesday.

"The deductibles have been approved by the country's insurance regulator and are not suspected of violating state regulations," Dong Bo, an official of the Department of Property and Casualty Supervision of the China Insurance Regulatory Commission told the Xinhua News Agency Wednesday.

PICC and Ping'an Insurance were the only domestic insurers to have deductibles in their auto insurance policies, the *Beijing Daily Messenger* said.

"Insurance companies implementing deductibles is a trend in the industry," Gu Wei, assistant to the general manager at PICC's Beijing Branch, was quoted as saying.

GM, Domestic Carmaker to Produce Hybrids, Fuel Cell Vehicles

By Sun Yongjian

General Motors Corp. and Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp. Group (SAIC), one of China's leading vehicle manufacturers, signed an agreement last Saturday to jointly pursue the development and commercialization of hybrid and fuel cell vehicles in China, the American automotive giant announced through a press release.

During the signing ceremony, GM Chairman and CEO Rick Wagoner and SAIC Chairman Chen Xianglin announced their companies would first co-develop a demonstration vehicle using the latest fuel cell technology from GM's HydroGen3 fuel cell vehicle.

The two-year demonstration, scheduled to begin in Shanghai early next year,

was intended to showcase the benefits of fuel cell power in real-life commercial applications, the release said.

Fuel cells, which fused hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, heat and water, were considered the ultimate power source because of their efficiency and lack of pollution, it said.

"This is in line with the long-term strategic plan of the Chinese government to promote a sustainable automotive industry," Wagoner was quoted as saying.

"The recent surge in oil prices has driven home the need to develop vehicles that run on alternatives to traditional gasoline and diesel, and Shanghai's leaders have pledged support for research and development of such vehicles."

China Predicted to Buy Over 2,000 Planes in 20 Years

By Annie Wei

The domestic airline industry will need to purchase 2,372 new planes by 2023 to replace aging jets and keep up with China's economic growth and booming tourism trade, Chinese planemaker China Aviation Industry Corporation I (AVIC I) predicted in an annual report on the future of the civilian plane market released on Monday.

The report said the same forces would fuel the growth of the air logistics industry, creating demand for an additional new 396 cargo aircraft in the same period.

The large majority of passenger planes bought in the next two decades should be smaller jets with 150 seats or fewer, it said.

The AVIC 1 report diagnosed Air China, the country's main carrier, as not very

competitive on the international market. It dropped from carrying 66.6 percent of China's passenger traffic in 1992 to 37.7 percent in 2003 and its logistics deliveries fell from 78.2 percent of all mail and products air shipped in China to 33.5 percent in the same period.

Thanks to its huge scale, however, China's civil aviation industry had great potential and passenger volume should surge 9.3 percent annually between this year and 2023, the report said.

Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou would emerge as the major hubs for Chinese airlines and budget airlines would be forced to tightly control costs in the face of fierce pricing competition, perhaps limiting profit margins, the report concluded.

Chinese, American Firms Talk about Tapping E-Business

By Sun Yongjian

Beijing-based Searainbow Holding Corp. is negotiating with US-based Broadlane Corp. over possible cooperation in the developing e-business field, a Searainbow source told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

"Negotiations are ongoing smoothly and have entered a substantial phase," said Lu Hui, manager of Searainbow's market department.

"Charles Sanders, the president and CEO of Broadlane will visit China before the end of this year no matter whether any contract is signed or not."

Lu said Broadlane had expressed confidence in China's environment for e-business, which involves trade and transactions handled electronically, mostly through the Internet.

Though still new to many Chinese consumers, e-business is entering a boom and expected to develop quickly in 2005, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on Tuesday.

Foreign capital is flooding into the domestic industry though purchases of stakes in Chinese firms, private fund investments and establishment of joint ventures, the newspaper said.

Roche Opens Research Center in Shanghai

By Pan Hao

Roche China, the domestic branch of the international pharmaceutical maker, opened a research and development center in Shanghai's Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park and the facility began operations last Saturday, the Xinhua news agency reported.

The center would focus on medicinal chemistry research and start with a staff of 40 scientists, the company announced in a press release on its website.

"This will be Roche's fifth

pharma research site and the knowledge exchange with our existing research sites in Europe and the US will support our mission to develop and produce innovative, clinically differentiated medicines," Roche Chairman and CEO Franz B. Humer was quoted as saying in the press release.

"We can rely on a wealth of intellectual expertise and with our financial investments, we want to underline Roche's long-term commitment to China".

Sky the Limit for New Raycom Infotech Tower

By Pan Hao

Following the success of Tower A in Raycom Infotech Park, Tower C, which received investment from Lenovo (Holding) Co. has opened and around 40 percent of its space has been let to business customers.

The 70-meter tall Tower

C keeps the same design spirit as its Tower A predecessor, but places more emphasis on user-friendliness and efficiency through upgraded facilities such as wireless LAN and other telecom services, and the beauty of its grounds, designed by SOM.

By Pan Hao

Industrial sewing machine maker Shanghai Shangong (Europe) Holding Co., signed an agreement with Germany's FAG Kugelfischer at the end of October to purchase Durkopp Adler AG (DA), making the Chinese company the world's third-largest in the industry and strengthening its position in the US and European markets, the website sohu.com reported Sunday.

Shanghai Shangong (Europe), based in Hamburg Germany, purchased FAG Kugel-

fischer's 94.98 percent share in DA and planned to buy out the remaining publicly-held shares in the company to obtain complete ownership, the report said.

The purchase made Shanghai Shangong China's top sewing machine maker and should give it a major technological boost.

"Other domestic makers can only produce 600-700 models, but now we can manufacture 6,000 with DA's facility," said Zhang Yifeng, secretary to the Shanghai Shangong's board of directors.



Xinhua Photo

Washington, November 3, (AP) – President Bush claimed a re-election mandate Wednesday after a record 59 million Americans chose him over Democrat John Kerry and voted to expand Republican control of Congress as well. He pledged to pursue his agenda on taxes and Iraq while seeking “the broad support of all Americans.”

Kerry conceded defeat in make-or-break Ohio rather than launch a legal fight reminiscent of the contentious Florida recount of four years ago. “I hope that we can begin the healing,” the Massachusetts senator said.

Claiming a second term denied his father, George H W Bush, the president struck a conciliatory tone, too. “A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation,” he said, speaking directly to Kerry’s supporters. “To make this nation stronger and better, I will need your support and I will work to earn it,” he said. “I will do all I can do to deserve your trust.”

Bush’s vote totals were the biggest ever and his slice of the vote, 51 percent, made him the first president to claim a majority since 1988 when his father won 53 percent

Bush Wins Re-Election, Seeks Broad Support

against Democrat Michael Dukakis.

And the president’s intention was clear as he ticked off a familiar list of second-term goals: overhaul the tax code and Social Security at home while waging war in Iraq and elsewhere to stem terror. His victory ensures Republican dominance of virtually every quarter of the US political system for years to come – the White House, Congress and the federal judiciary.

Analyst’s Take:

Since Bush and Kerry both wanted to wage a War on Terror, the issues of the Iraq War and national security remained at the core of the election debate. The importance of the economy was crippled. Therefore, no matter who was elected, it won’t dramatically affect the world economic environment.

Now that Bush has been re-elected, there may be two effects. On the one hand, world oil prices will possibly decline because the Bush administration has begun to adjust national energy strategy and tried hard to ease America’s dependence on oil consumption from the first term. America’s declining need for oil will help bring down world oil prices.

On the other hand, China might see better Sino-US trade relations. Since 1972, reelected governments have tended to adopt a more friendly and stable attitude towards China. And Sino-US relations weren’t a core question during the election debate between the two candidates.

– **Lin Hongyu, academic advisor from the University of International Relations postgraduate department and visiting scholar at Stanford University, USA**

(Chu Meng)

Argentina Supreme Court Approves Forced Conversion of Bank Accounts into Pesos

Buenos Aires, October 26 (AFX) – The Argentine Supreme Court ruled that the forced conversion of dollar-denominated bank accounts into pesos was constitutional, court officials said.

Five judges voted in favor of declaring the move constitutional, while one judge voted against.

Dollar-denominated bank deposits were converted into pesos at a rate of 1.4 pesos per dollar, plus an inflation index, in 2002 when Argentina was hit by a financial crisis and the 1-for-1 peg to the dollar was scrapped.

Prior to the ruling announcement, HSBC analysts said that, “even though the Supreme Court is considering a specific claim – and a final ruling on the issue is not expected at this stage – its decision will set an important precedent for future similar demands”.

On Friday, the state attorney had recommended that the court rule in favor of the move and revoke a local court ruling that declared it unconstitutional.

Analyst’s Take:

From 1991 to 2002, Argentina took currency board arrangement as its monetary policy to maintain the stability of the currency, which means every peso is issued on the basis of one dollar. And this policy had a positive effect on Argentina’s economy before the economic crisis of 2001.

Argentina kept this policy until 2002, when it was abol-

ished. This was not only to prevent loss of flexible currency policy as one of the levers of macroeconomic management, but also to pay back the huge foreign debt. At the end of 2004, Argentina will suffer a mountain of foreign debt repayments: \$145 billion, or \$180 billion if domestic dollar bonds are included. From the beginning of the crisis, \$33 billion has fled Argentina.

In addition to billions of fake dollar deposits, Argentina’s solvency has decreased sharply. Also, Argentina will bear a heavy burden of repayment if free exchange between the peso and US dollar is permitted.

When negotiating on the arrangement for debt repayment with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an effective currency policy would help in securing a loan from the IMF.

The Argentina Supreme Court forced the conversion of dollar bank accounts into pesos. Although a bit extreme, it did have an outstanding effect on steadying the economy. In fact, the currency authority can depreciate the peso to spur exports. By adopting a flexible currency policy, the authority will enable the rise of its foreign exchange reserve and enhance its solvency and thus successfully weather the crises of foreign debt repayment.

Argentina’s exports increased 20 percent this year, and in May the foreign exchange income was \$400 million, higher than in the first four months this year. The foreign exchange reserve increased from \$9 billion in May last year to \$18 billion at present.

Additionally, giving up the dollar peg provokes arguments across all classes of the country. People have marched in protest. To some extent, the legislative measures which the Supreme Court adopted can also alleviate social conflict in Argentina.

– **Yang Zhimin, deputy director of the Institute of Latin American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences** (Dong Xin)

Report: EU’s Growth Strategy Off-Target

Brussels, Belgium, November 3 (AP) – The European Union’s ambition to become the world’s most dynamic economy by 2010 is becoming a tale of “missed objectives and failed promises,” said a report released Wednesday from a panel led by a former Dutch prime minister.

The report said European Union leaders have failed to deliver on economic reform promises since launching a decade-long growth and employment strategy in 2000.

It argues the “Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment” remains valid and can still make Western Europe the world’s most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010.

The strategy prescribed changes in economic and social policy-making that EU governments have found tough to implement.

These include tax cuts, a later retirement age, reforming health care and pension systems, making it easier for companies to hire and fire workers and cutting red tape for businesses.

If the picture is mixed on these steps – that would have a quick impact on job creation and growth – it is not much better on longer-term measures.

The EU is “not particularly strong” in exploiting advanced information and communication technologies or improving university education.

“Whether in patent appli-

cations, numbers of scientific researchers, universities’ standing in international rankings, numbers of Nobel Prize winners or references in scientific papers, Europe trails the United States,” said the report.

The study comes at a time when Europe’s competitive position is waning. The EU’s economic growth rate is projected to be 2 percent in 2004 and 2.4 percent in 2005 – about half of the global growth rates for these two years.

The Lisbon Strategy set a series of goals, including a 70 percent overall employment and a requirement that half of people over 55 should be working.

Investment in research and development should equal at least 3 percent of a country’s gross domestic product, at least 30 percent of West European households should have internet access and electricity markets should be liberalized for all business customers. EU nations spend only 1.9 percent of their GDP on research and development.

“Halfway to 2010, the overall picture is very mixed,” said the report. “Much needs to be done in order to prevent (the Lisbon Strategy) from becoming a synonym for missed objectives and failed promises.”

It says while there has been a lack of political leadership, other factors are also to blame.

It cited the collapse of the overvalued dot.com sector followed by a recession, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and trans-Atlantic trade disputes. Also, bringing eight East European nations, plus Cyprus and Malta, into the EU in 2004 lowered the economic numbers for the EU as a whole.

Asia-Pacific Mobile Telcos in Regional Wireless Telephony Joint Venture

California, November 4 (NewsFactor) – Seven leading Asia-Pacific mobile phone operators are investing \$30-40 million over three years to set up the region’s largest joint-venture wireless telephony company.

The new venture, Bridge Mobile, will have a potential customer base of over 300 million subscribers.

The founding partners in Bridge Mobile are Globe Telecom of the Philippines, Bharti (India), Maxis (Malaysia), Optus (Australia), SingTel (Singapore), Taiwan Cellular Corporation (Taiwan) and Telkomsel (Indonesia).

The seven operators said in a statement that they will jointly invest in Bridge Mobile to build and establish a regional mobile infrastructure and common service platform.

Each of the seven companies will subscribe for an equal number of shares in Bridge Mobile for cash at par. As founding shareholders, they will each have a permanent seat on its board of directors.

The seven companies involved in Bridge Mobile have a combined base of over 56 million subscribers, making the new company the largest mobile joint venture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Volkswagen, German Union OK Pay Freeze

Hanover, Germany, November 3 (AP) – Under pressure to cut costs and improve earnings, the automaker Volkswagen AG struck a far-reaching compromise with its workers Wednesday, winning a 28-month pay freeze and lower pay for new hires in return for a no-layoff guarantee until 2012.

Under the wage deal, pay scales would be frozen through January 31, 2007, with only a one-time payment of 1,000 euros (about \$1,270) next year. New hires could start at up to 20 percent lower pay, and the company would cut overtime costs by expanding a plan under which extra hours are banked so workers can work less when demand is slow and still get paid.

The deal was an example

of big German companies’ new willingness to push workers for cost savings. DaimlerChrysler AG won 500 million euros (\$635 million) in concessions from workers at its plants in southwestern Germany in July, and Siemens AG persuaded workers at telephone repair facilities in northwest Germany to work longer hours for no extra pay in return for not seeing 2,000 jobs go to lower-wage Hungary.

Volkswagen says it must cut its overhead by 30 percent by 2011 to avoid dramatic job reductions in Germany, where high wages and benefits, long vacations and heavy payroll taxes make industrial labor more expensive than in nearby countries in Eastern Europe.

UAE President’s Death Makes Little Impact on World Crude Oil Prices

Dubai, November 3, (AFP) – The death of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan, president of the oil-rich United Arab Emirates (UAE), is not expected to have a major impact on already climbing world crude prices, experts said.

The death of the ailing Sheikh Zayed “had been expected and will not take the markets by surprise”, said Abdulkhalek Abdullah, who heads a research center in Sharjah, one of the seven members of the UAE federation.

“Markets will not be greatly affected ... Markets are usually affected by violent and unex-

pected events,” he told AFP.

Sheikh Zayed, who ruled the UAE since its birth in 1971, died Tuesday. He was in his late eighties.

The UAE is ranked fourth within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with a production quota of 2.356 million barrels per day (bpd) and is currently producing about 2.5 million bpd.

The country has proven reserves of 97.8 billion barrels of oil (fifth in the world) and over six trillion cubic meters (212 trillion cubic feet) of gas, again ranking it fourth in the world.

Female Pioneer to Leave Viacom

Florida, November 3 (USA Today) – Sherry Lansing, who led the way for women to reach the highest levels in Hollywood, will step down as chairman of Viacom’s (VIA) Paramount Motion Picture Group at the end of next year.

Lansing, 60, shattered the film industry’s glass ceiling with senior jobs at Columbia, Fox and Paramount.

Paramount, under her watch, produced three Best Picture Oscar winners in four years: Titanic, the top-grossing film of all time in 1997; Braveheart in 1995 and Forrest Gump in 1994.

Lansing announced last week that she did not want to renew her contract, which expires at the end of next year. The first female studio executive with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Lansing says she wants her move will start a new chapter in her personal and professional life.

Lansing has been a role model for female executives, particularly in entertainment. A former actress, model and school teacher, she was a senior vice president at Columbia Pictures and Hollywood’s first female studio production president at 20th Century Fox.

Can of Ancient Roman Cosmetic Cream Found in London on Wednesday

London, November 3 (Reuters) – Scientists have unearthed a small tin canister dating back to the middle of the second century AD in an excavated Roman temple precinct in London that contains a sophisticated white cream that could rival today’s top cosmetics.

“It is quite a complicated little mixture,” Richard Evershed, an analytical chemist at the University of Bristol in south-western England, told Reuters on Wednesday. “Perhaps they didn’t understand the chemistry of everything but they obviously knew what they were doing.”

The pot, measuring 2.4 x 2 inches, is thought to be the only Roman tin of cream of its kind to be found intact and in such good

condition.

It was discovered in a waterlogged ditch preserved under wooden planks in thick layers of mud.

The scientists, who reported the findings in the journal Nature, think the whitish cream was probably worn by fashionable Roman women. A fair complexion was popular in Roman times, according to the researchers.

“We’re speculating that it would have been some sort of foundation cream,” Evershed added.

The cream consists of about 40 percent animal fat – most likely from sheep or cattle – 40 percent starch and tin oxide. The fat forms the creamy base and the tin oxide makes the mixture opaque white.

Bad Sign for Silk Street

By Chu Meng

The only public toilet along Xiushui Market, better known as Silk Street, was torn down on Monday morning by the developers of the New Silk Street project, which stands just meters from the original market.

The move has sparked protest from Silk Street's vendors and management and been hailed as a sign that the whole market may share the toilet's fate in the near future.

Reports have swirled though the local media since June 19 that the market was going to be razed and its many small stalls put under the roof of New Silk Street, a building being constructed by developer Beijing Xinya Shenghong Real Estate Co.

The justifications given for the removal of the market, one of Beijing's top tourist destination for foreign travelers, as well

as a popular shopping place for embassy staff and foreign residents, were that the stalls were unlicensed and it posed a severe fire hazard.

Last Friday, the developer posted a demolition notice at the market's entrance to notify vendors and the Jianguomenwai sub-district office's economic administration center, the local administrative body, that the toilet and other so-called illegal buildings would be taken down before November 4 because they stood on project ground.

"At about half past nine on Sunday, seven or eight construction workers from New Silk Street came to the toilet with hammers in their hands. Within a few minutes, they'd smashed all the glass windows and tore off the roof. People from our office managed to stop them at 10 am," Shi Xiuli from the Silk

Street administration office told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

"We think it this may be a signal our market is about to be demolished, even though we have tried hard to fight against the developers."

One Silk Street vendor was quoted as saying in the *Beijing Morning Post* that the toilet's water supply had been cut off three days before it was torn down.

Yang Guobin, general manager of Beijing Xinya Shenghong Real Estate, went to Silk Street on Monday afternoon to explain the move to stall owners and the administration office.

"It was indeed within the range of our project. We have to place drainage pipes in the area. Most importantly, the toilet is actually under the administration of Chaoyang Environment and Sanitation Bureau, not the market's economic administra-

tion center. Our company has already had to pay the bureau thousands of yuan to compensate for delaying the installation of those pipes for one day. If you have any doubts, you can find them and ask," Yang was quoted as saying.

"The toilet is a public facility, though it is on their land. And because it is the only toilet in the market, it is very important for the hundreds of visitors we get every day. Even if the developers had the right to do that, they should have to build a replacement one first," Shi added.

On Wednesday afternoon, an employee of the Jianguomenwai sub-district office who would not give his name told *Beijing Today* that the office had talked to the sanitation bureau and was opening three toilets previously not accessible by the public.



Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Kids in Space!

By Liu Zhaoxi

A group of 20 lucky high school students became the first young people to participate in the simulated launch of a manned spacecraft at the opening of a new exhibit at the Donggaodi Youth Science Club in Fengtai District on Tuesday.

The program, which imitates the launching process of the Shenzhou Five, the craft behind China's first manned space flight, allows teenagers to go through realistic replications of transporting, testing and launching the spaceship over an exciting 40 minutes.

"To achieve the goal of becoming the third largest space-faring nation, we need more people to introduce advanced space technology to our kids," Jin Sheng, coordinator of the simulation program, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

The exhibition took over 18 months, millions of yuan and a dedicated group of space scientists to set up, Jin said. Students in their third year of high school or older are allowed to operate the system after undergoing a few minutes of training.

Suspected Kidnapper Denies Criminal Intent

By Liu Zhaoxi

A man suspected of kidnapping a local woman argued during a hearing at the municipal court of Haidian District on Monday that he only committed the act to get media attention to his family's plight, not to collect a ransom.

Su Wendong, 32, of Shandong Province, was charged with kidnapping by prosecutors after he abducted a ticket seller at the CCTV tower on the West Third Ring Road in July.

In court, Su explained that he originally planned to commit suicide by jumping from the tower in order to get media attention to the unresolved death of his wife and son in a bus accident,

but he did not have the money to cover the tower's entry charge.

He testified that he then grabbed the young, female ticket seller and told nearby people to call the police and demanded to talk to reporters from CCTV programs *Focus* and *Law Today*, the *Beijing Daily Messenger* reported on Tuesday.

Su even recited an article of Chinese penal law that defines kidnapping as meant to obtain money or other property, which he said was not his intent and therefore absolved him of committing a crime, the newspaper said.

The court finished hearing the case on Monday but has yet to pronounce its judgment.

Driver Dies Trying to Race Past Train

By Wang Fang

A local man died on Wednesday morning when a train smashed his car as he tried to drive through a crossing at the Shuanghe flyover in Shunyi District. He was flung far from his Ford sedan on impact and was later declared dead where he landed by police.

The accident occurred at 10:55 am when the Ford darted directly in front of the No. 2252 train inbound to Beijing from Dandong, Liaoning Province.

The train's conductor told *Beijing Youth Daily* that he slammed the brakes as soon as he saw the car, but it was too late. The train continued forward around 500 meters after smashing the car before finally coming to a stop.

A Mr. Zhang who witnessed the accident was quoted as saying that dozens of 100-yuan bills came flying from the car when it was hit by the train. But no one at the scene took any of the cash be-

cause it was considered bad luck to use a dead person's money, Zhang said.

A worker at the flyover told the newspaper that vehicle congestion around the flyover may have blocked the train from the Ford driver's line of sight.

The train's locomotive car was damaged in the accident and had to be repaired on the site for over one hour before it could reach its destination, Beijing Railway Station.



The impact threw the driver meters from his car to his death. Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Uncooked Beans Poison Dozens at Local Company

By Chu Meng

Some 44 people stricken by food poisoning, all employees of the China Aviation Industry Fuel and Engine Company in Beijing, were out of danger by 8 pm Tuesday night after four hours of emergency treatment at Beijing Zhongyi Hospital.

The hospital later announced the people had all been poisoned by eating green beans from northeast China that were not sufficiently cooked.

Last Thursday, public health authorities from Haidian District issued warnings to dining halls and cafeterias to avoid serving the kind of beans in question because a total of 43 people in Beijing were poisoned in two cases involving the potentially dangerous legumes last month.

One company employee told *Beijing Youth Daily* later that day, "Our employees got very sick, one after one, and many vomited violently after eating boxed lunches containing green beans. As more people showed symptoms, we suspected it was a case of food poisoning. Around 4 pm, we rushed all 44 poisoned people to the hospital."

The green beans in question, called *youdou*, have wide, thick pods striped with dark red lines. They are popular in farmers' markets in northeast China and prized for their rich flavor, derived only after they are fully cooked. Vegetable vendors from Shenyang in China's northeastern Liaoning province told *Beijing Youth Daily* they had never heard of poisoning by *youdou*, even though the beans were widely available and popular.

Experts from the Ministry of Health were quoted by *Beijing Youth Daily* as saying that because the beans have thick pods and large peas inside, they take time to thoroughly boil. Beijing cooks unfamiliar with the beans are likely to not cook them to the point where they are both tasty and safe.

The ministry issued a warning to Beijing citizens on Wednesday to be cautious with *youdou* beans and to never eat them without first cooking them completely. However, the beans would not be pulled from local markets, the ministry said.

Who's Your Daddy?

By Liu Zhaoxi

The local media has been abuzz about the new movie *Life Translation*, not because of the film's quality, but because government authorities in Shenzhen recently sent notices to schools in the city in Guangdong Province pressing them to tell students to watch it.

At least one Shenzhen school sent letters last week to parents of students in grades seven through nine claiming the school had organized for their children to watch the movie on a weekday afternoon, but the students were required to cover the ticket prices themselves.

Soon after, one parent posted the letter online and wrote on the same website that the father of the leading actress in the movie was a top official in the Shenzhen government.

Once the matter was brought to light through the Internet, many people in the city and across the country started raising questions about the appropriateness, and real motivations, of the Shenzhen government's apparent promotion of the film.

An opinion article in the Shandong-based *Qilu Evening News* on Monday called on related government agencies, including supervision and law enforcement departments, in Shenzhen to step forward, find the truth of the case and protect against potential violations of public trust by officials.

Life Translated is based on a novel by Li Qianni, who is also the lead actress, and depicts the experiences of a 16-year-old Chinese girl studying in the UK. Li, 25, later told the media her father had no connection to the movie, or its questionable promotion, and said her parents were "completely innocent."

Li has been studying abroad since 1995 and holds a master's degree from New York University in the US, *Beijing Youth Dai-*



Li Qianni, lead actress in *Time Translated*, holds a majority share in its production company and her father is a Shenzhen official.

ly reported on Thursday. Though unemployed, she holds a total of over seven million yuan of investments in three companies, including an 80 percent stake worth 2.69 million yuan in the enterprise that produced her movie, the newspaper said.

Since the movie opened nationwide on October 27, it has not done well at the box office in any domestic city except in Shenzhen, the *Chongqing Chenbao* newspaper reported.

In recent years, the behavior of relatives and friends of government officials has become a sensitive issue in Chinese society. Last year, a middle-aged woman thought to be a relative of a high-ranking official killed one person and injured another 12 when she drove her BMW vehicle into a crowd in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province.

That case drew enormous attention from across the country and many people suspected that a Harbin court give the woman a light sentence as a result of her alleged official relationship, though those allegations have yet to be proven.



A pilot with the Russian Knights aerobatic team gets ready to fly on Wednesday morning. Photo by Photocome

Fifth Air Show Takes Wing

By Annie Wei

The Fifth China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition took off last Sunday in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province following an inaugural address from Vice Premier Huang Ju.

Representatives of 32 countries and regions are taking part in the seven-day air show, the latest session of a biennial event held in Zhuhai since 1996.

Major international airplane

companies, such as Boeing and Airbus, have established large presences at the show, which offers significantly more room for company displays, aircraft demonstrations, exhibitions and business conferences than the previous session.

Five teams from the UK, Russia, China and France were slated to put on aerobatics displays for air show audiences during the week.

Park Employee Killed in Bear Attack in Gansu

By Zhou Ying

A 46-year-old woman named Liu who worked at the Liongquan Park in Jinchang, Gansu Province died Sunday evening after she was severely mauled that morning by a bear whose pen she was cleaning.

A park employee told the Gansu-based *Xibu Shangbao* newspaper that day that Lu was found seriously injured inside the bear pen in the park's small zoo when other staff arrived at the scene.

"We rushed into the zoo immediately after we heard her cries. We got her out and sent her to the hospital," an unnamed witness was quoted as saying.

It appeared the victim forgot to drive the bear into an adjoining room before cleaning the pen, and she was quickly attacked by the bear after stepping into its pen.

One of her colleagues said Lu

had only

been

working

at the

park for

six

months

and was

set to

leave

the job

on No-

vember

1, just

one day

after the

tragedy.

The paper

said the

park had

been closed

since Sunday

and manage-

ment refused

to accept

any interviews

before a thor-

ough investiga-

tion of the case

was completed.

Park staff

refused to talk

to *Beijing Today*

over the phone

this week.



Park authorities have refused to speak about the victim or the fate of the bear.



Customers get in line at the bank

Photo by Photocom

Bank Rates Go Up for First Time in Decade of Economic Growth

By Chu Meng

China's Central Bank last Thursday raised interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade amid lingering concerns over inflation and a move towards slow economic growth.

After months of debate, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) hike of just over a quarter of a percent suggests the central government has finally decided to shift from a selective to a sweeping approach in cooling economic growth, which stood at 9.1 percent during the first three quarters.

"This interest rate rise... is to make bigger use of economic measures in resource allocation and macro-adjustment," stated a PBOC press release announcing the raising of benchmark rates on annual loans to 5.58 percent from 5.31 percent, and the rate on annual deposits to 2.25 percent from 1.98 percent.

Before raising interest rates, measures used included banning new investments in certain sectors and imposing tougher rules for converting farmland to industrial use, as well as repeated increases of commercial banks' minimum reserves. The last time the central bank raised lending rates was in July 1995. In February 2002, they were lowered to boost a sluggish economy.

In raising interest rates this time, the central bank also gives commercial banks more freedom in setting their own interest rates, a significant liberalization of the rates. The upper limit on the Renminbi lending rate has been scrapped. Banks "in principle" could now charge as much as they want for loans. Previously, banks could charge no more than 70 percent over the benchmark rate set by the central bank.

Banks can also now offer a deposit rate lower than the benchmark, a practice that not previously permitted. The rise was immediately felt across the world, driving price changes in securities, commodity and currency markets amid discussions over the effect of a slowed Chinese economy on the international market.

People's Bank of China Monetary Policy Committee spokesman, refusing to be named, **It is to safeguard the long-and-middle-term deposit interest rates.**

This move is good for increasing the general Chinese people's deposit benefits, especially the long-and-middle-term ones. Moreover, at this time, the rising range of interest rates of individual accumulation funds for housing loans and commercial banks' individual-oriented housing loans are lower than the base rate of commercial ones. It is not only helpful to balance the supply and demand of the housing industry, but also beneficial to house buyers.

Generally speaking, the monetary policy actions taken so far have had their effect, and the current monetary and credit performance is in line with targets of

steady monetary and credit growth. China's first interest rate hike in nearly a decade sends a signal that policymakers are eyeing market-based tools to guide the sound growth of the economy.

Yi Xianrong, director of the Institute of Banking and Finance of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, **The interest rate will continue to rise.**

In my opinion, 0.27 percent is just a tentative signal. If those economic overheating sectors still show such a tendency, China's central bank will probably raise the Renminbi interest rate again in the near future. It is estimated that in the following 12-18 months, the rate may increase two or three times as 0.27 is too moderate to solve all the problems of crowded investment in the real estate sector, inflation and increased oil and energy prices.

Some experts made a calculation: although deposit interest rate has reached 2.25 percent, in reality it is only 1.8 percent after deducting tax of 20 percent. If we take the Consumer Price Index's jump of September by 5.2 percent into account, the actual interest rate is minus 3.4 percent.

Pan Shiyi, Chinese real estate giant and President of China Soho, **Housing prices will decline.**

A report handed out by our company's financial department showed that the central bank's move would raise housing developers' investment costs by about 2 percent, and would correspondingly harden the burden of housing buyers by 2 percent. Although the moderate fluctuation cannot influence the whole real estate industry, it will surely change ordinary people's hopes of buying a house, especially low and mid price range. That is to say, as interest rates keep rising, the prices of housing developments will fall. But for top-range buyers, 18,000 yuan more on a 20-year, 500,000 yuan mortgage means nothing.

Although the accuracy of the CPI is questioned by some observers, it is agreed its changes reflect trends and its sharp upward curve this year means the real interest rate is very close to zero, which could spur unhealthy investments.

Xu Yiding, Investment Consultant of Minzu Securities Company's Research and Development Center, **there was moderate influence on China's stock-market.**

The Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchanges foresaw the rate increase, because the stockmarket is so sensitive to any tiny changes in currency, and we analysts have always been eyeing it. Thus the bulletin board of the stock exchange has begun to decline after the first three days' fluctuations.

The nominal exchange rate is unlikely to be adjusted very soon, but that doesn't mean that the market-oriented exchange rate reforms will end. The market-driven exchange rate means that the nominal rate will be allowed to float within a wider band eventually.

Interest hikes will draw some capital towards deposits. It is widely seen as a cause of decline in the stock index. However, many analysts argued that keeping the peg would make it difficult for the central bank to keep a lid on money supply as further rises in yuan interest rates could spur more capital inflows, including speculative hot money, because one of the main reasons the central bank had delayed the long-expected rate change was due to worries that higher yuan rates could spur capital inflows.

Reuters, China slashes open market volume after rate hike.

China's central bank drained 13 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) from the banking system in Tuesday's open market operations, a gentle move to help the market digest an unexpected interest rate hike last week. The People's Bank of China sold 8 billion yuan in annual bills and siphoned off another 5 billion yuan by entering into seven-day repurchase agreements, down sharply from the 29 billion yuan it drained on Tuesday last week, it said in a statement.

Beijing raised interest rates for the first time in nine years last Thursday in its latest and strongest step to gently slow a racing economy. That allowed yields on bills to edge up, which otherwise would have surged due to the interest rate hike.

Jiang Bing, 32-year-old lawyer from Zhejiang Province, **Does not change my plan to buy a home of my own.**

I planned to spend about 800,000 yuan (US\$96,386) buying a 120-square-metre apartment near the Third Ring Road. I have chosen a suitable one. I won't change my plan to buy a home of my own, and I will make the downpayment in the next few weeks.

As far as I know, many people in need will continue to buy homes of their own, despite the interest rate hike. But the rate hike will have a big impact on speculative purchasing, because speculators will consider whether they can make money or not after the rate hike. Some people might keep their money in hand and take a wait-and-see attitude.

Anonymous, Don't we need a public hearing before action?

The State Council has repeatedly said that any policy related directly or indirectly to people's interests was to have a public hearing to collect a broad spectrum of public opinion and make more democratic and scientific decisions.

An interest rate hike will inevitably engender related moves in the stock and financial markets, and change average people's investment plans such as house or car purchasing. Therefore it is inevitably a policy closely related to people's interests. Don't we need a public hearing before taking action? Why don't China's central bank and any other functional governmental departments hold such a hearing before adjusting the base interest rate?

Shopping Centers Grow into Super-Size Malls

Emporiums get bigger, but do they get better?

By Liu Zhaoxi

It would reportedly take four days to finish visiting all the stores in this shiny 600-meter-long, 120-meter-wide building. The 550,000-square-meter, seven-story mall opened for business on October 24.

Golden Resources New Yansha Mall, the largest in Beijing, includes more than 600 stores such as car showrooms, movie theaters, bookstores, beauty salons and restaurants.

"It is like a big community," Ding Fengxia, a visitor to the mall told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. Although new to Beijing, shopping malls are no longer strange to Chinese people in other cities.

An investigation by several government agencies from March to May indicated there are about 400 shopping malls all over the country with a total investment of more than 2 trillion yuan, *The Economic Observer* reported in September.

Whether such a proliferation of large shopping malls is a good thing for the overall economy has attracted attention from scholars and government officials across the nation. One major concern is the use of land. Construction usually involves a large area of land precious to cities or farmers. Another concern is the financial risks of opening a mall, requiring huge loans from China's state banks. The malls rarely seem to return a profit.

Michael Kercheval, president of the International Council for Shopping Centers, **Shopping malls do not work along the lines of the bigger, the better.**

There are 45,000 shopping centers in the USA and only 5 percent are large malls. All malls are shopping centers, but not all shopping centers are malls. As for shopping malls in current China, many have a single-faceted pursuit of size, trying to be the biggest in the country or Asia, but end up being similar super clothing selling courts.

(from *Jiefang Daily*)

An executive who refused to be named at Morgan Stanley Japan, **Poor management and single-resource investment make success difficult for shopping malls in China.**

Only 10 percent of shopping malls are successful in China. So many failures can be attributed to poor management. The mall operators are only satisfied with collecting rent, but do not regard tenants as long-time partners in sharing the benefits of business development. Meanwhile, China lacks professional marketing and planning personnel for shopping malls.

Eighty percent of investment in shopping malls in China comes from bank loans, while in other countries, trust funds, such as pensions, are the main source of investment.

(from *Jiefang Daily*)

Wu Weiqun, journalist, **"Intracorporal circulation" is risky.**

The key to success for shopping malls overseas is the separation of investor, manager and store runner. But in China, some large commercial groups use bank loans to develop shopping malls, recruit stores by themselves and make their own companies the main stores in the mall. Such a model of "intracorporal circulation" is very risky.

(from *Jiefang Daily*)

The Economic Observer editorial, **Some real estate companies use construction of malls to reap staggering profits.**

Some real estate developers seek land use permission under the name of a mall project, bringing lower land prices because of a favorable national policy for mall construction. But then they use the land to build villas, hotels or golf courses, or put the land on hold and sell it when the price climbs. The reality is that although shopping malls have been around in China for years, so far there is not one large shopping mall that makes a profit. Most are losing money. Real estate developers only consider making money. They do not argue against starting a new mall project. They cause a huge waste of resources, an overflow of shopping outlets. Consequently, many malls go empty or into bankruptcy, the developers can't repay their debts to the bank, the stores lose money and the farmers lose their land.

Hong Tao, professor at Beijing Technology and Business University, **Mall business is an inevitable trend that demands caution.**

The market has the need for such shopping malls, where comprehensive needs of customers can be met. There is nothing wrong with building such a mall and this is the trend of the future. But places with insufficient conditions should not begin such projects blindly. Otherwise, the risks and waste will be huge. The losses caused by a large shopping mall could be more than the money needed to establish a new company. To run a shopping mall needs a long-term strategic plan of 10-20 years. It's not just about maintaining the facility, but more about management.

An official who refused to be named at the management company of Golden Resources New Yansha Mall, **Large malls need time to grow up.**

Any huge mall needs an incubation period for its management to adjust. Our goal is to help the stores here gain more profit. So far, the stores in the mall are not diverse enough and we did not do much promotion in the early stage of opening the mall. We're going to introduce more stores to make the mall more complete and attractive to more customers.

Woman who refused to be named, vendor at Golden Resources New Yansha Mall, **Customers are fewer than expected.**

So far, the number of customers is fewer than expected. But the commodities available in the mall are comprehensive, which I think will attract more people.

Peng Zijun, customer at Golden Resources New Yansha Mall, **The mall is just for ordinary folk to broaden their horizons.**

GR New Yansha Mall could be seen as the pride of Beijing, improving the quality of the retail business of Beijing. If we only have markets like the Beijing Zoo market around the city, it is boring. But a mall like this is for ordinary folks to come and broaden their horizons. The market of the mall is too classy to make me have the desire to buy.

Woman customer, a schoolteacher who refused to be named, at Golden Resources New Yansha Mall: **The mall is good, but not perfect.**

The shopping environment of the mall is nice. Stores at downtown Beijing are always crowded. Sometimes I have to wait in line to get to try on clothes. Such a thing is not likely to happen at this large mall. But the service is insufficient. It is still a little inconvenient for me to find the store where I want to shop.



Golden Resources New Yansha Mall

By Zhou Ying

Teenage boys love'em. Parents hate them. But cyber cafés are here to stay in China, and what worries adult authorities is their youngsters' easy access to subversive materials such as gambling, pornography and online games.

There's a better reason to worry. After a fire in the Lan-jisu Cyber Café in Beijing's university district on June 16, 2002 killed 24, the city placed an immediate ban on the city's 2,400 Internet bars. They were re-opened months later.

Thus in China, all citizens must register with an ID card when they enter legal cyber café, their giant firewall-protected surfing habits can easily be monitored. All cafés are supposed to close at midnight. Few do. According to Xinhuanet, last year, more than 80 percent of cafés are illegal.

The "Report on China Cyber café Industry Investigation" conducted by Cultural Market Development Center of Chinese Ministry of Culture offers insights into the mindset of the authorities in coping with the problem of feeding young people's thirst for thrills without damaging the national interest of developing high-tech talent.

Background

The domestic cyber café industry sprang up in the early 1990s. In the old days when resources were limited, a person might pay as much as 20 yuan an hour at a cyber café.

With the rapid development of the online gaming industry since 2000, charges have plummeted to a few kuai. With this, the cyber café has become a brand-new kind of entertainment venue. The industry is growing fast and creating money and jobs.

The investigation found that there are more than 100,000 cyber cafés in the entire country, 10,000 less than last year, of which 21 percent make more than 5,000 yuan monthly profits, 28 percent as much as 10,000 yuan, and 3 percent make between 80,000 and 150,000 yuan. Besides surfing charges, a key income for cyber cafés comes from food consumption.

As a new rising industry, the cyber cafés support new forms of investment and bring jobs. According to the survey, the industry employs more than one million people.

The cyber café industry also benefits the computer chip, network and software industries 129.5 billion yuan in profit.

Governance

Not long after the deadly fire, October 11, 2002, the government released the Internet Service Site Business Management Regulations.

The regulations require windows be left unlocked and doors

Official Survey Suggests Changes to Rules Governing Cyber Cafes



A "new concept" café in Beijing

Photos by Photocom

Reasons for entering cyber café

Reasons	Percentage
Downloading music	3.79
Surfing the internet	7.67
More choices of online game	13.59
Influence of friends	13.98
Higher speed	13.98
Lower price	9.71
Easier access to online gaming	7.57
More choices of online movies	6.89
High configuration	7.09
Good atmosphere	15.73

Monthly income of the cyber cafés

Monthly income (yuan)	percentage
Less than 5,000	14
5,000-10,000	21
10,001-20,000	28
20,001-30,000	18
30,001-50,000	9
50,001-80,000	7
80,001-150,000	3



A Ningbo cyber café

unblocked. Owners must demonstrate sufficient capital to own a business. They must close between midnight and 8 am, ban children under 16 and locate their businesses further than 200 meters from primary and middle schools. They must also prevent customers from accessing material considered subversive or pornographic. Café owners are required to show their records to authorities upon request, and everyone must show identification before using a computer at a café.

The survey found 73 percent of cyber café operators believe the opening hour regulations seriously harm their business and 87 percent of surfers think it feasible for cafés to open overnight on weekends or during the holidays.

"As long as netizens need that service, we should meet their needs. Otherwise, the market abandoned by legal cyber cafés will be occupied by unlicensed," the report stated.

Not surprisingly, cyber café operators who have undergone the arduous process of licensing with the city authorities regard their illegal competitors as a public enemy. Nearly 92 percent insist illegal cyber cafés hurt them.

"Actually nearly all the social problems occur in unlicensed cyber cafés. Therefore as long as we can successfully hold back development of illegal cyber cafés, all problems can be solved," one operator, who refused to be named, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

Customer profile

Ninety percent of Chinese surfers are male, according to the survey. Seventy percent are 18-30 years old. Researchers found 65 percent of cyber café

customers are single. More than half are college graduates.

The report suggests the main reason women do not want to enter cyber cafés is the intimidating male environment.

The main goal of customers? Entertainment.

"I really like playing online games at the cyber café," says Zhai Wei, a student at Beijing University of Technology. "My friends and I can get together to enjoy the fun of online games, and we can select whatever we want there."

Small business

The authorities tend to turn down applications by small operators.

"We aim to boost cyber café business by encouraging chain operations," Liu Qiang, an official at the Internet culture division of Ministry of Culture in China, told Xinhua in June last year "It helps to standardize the business."

"But our purpose isn't to limit or forbid the existence of individual or private cyber cafés. We encourage mergers and acquisitions," he said, adding that more than 95 percent of China's 110,000 cyber cafés were privately owned.

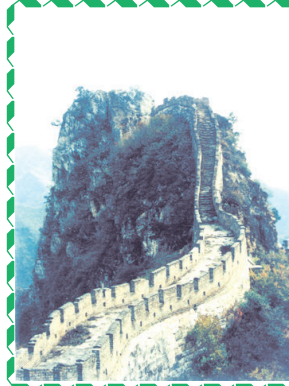
But the investigation found few operators want to join a chain, complaining the overheads are too high.

The report appears to have prompted officials from the Ministry of Culture to amend the regulations.

"We may consider changing some rules, such as the business hours of cyber cafés, and we will give access to young people on condition they are accompanied by their guardians," an anonymous official from the Ministry of Culture revealed last week.

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By Wang Fang

Their illegal driving licences are believed to be responsible for the deaths of 11 people and serious injuries to 14 in 124 traffic accidents in Jilin City, Jilin Province.

Five senior traffic police officers began trial last week accused of issuing licences for bribes, following a two-year secret investigation by three *Guangming Daily* reporters.

The corrupt cops had allegedly issued 30 licences a day to driving schools from August 2001 to January 2003, accepting more than 5.6 million yuan for 22,156 licences.

Jilin City Police Bureau issued a notice on Monday, demanding those who bought their driving licences to sit the test again. Otherwise, their licences will be cancelled.

Anonymous letter

In August 2001, an anonymous letter arrived at *Guangming Daily* alleging Jilin traffic police were selling licences to driving schools for students who did not want to sit the driving test.

A secret inquiry by the paper in Jilin on November 5, 2001 confirmed the letter.

The results of their inquiry could not be revealed for a further two years. It needed a serious traffic accident to make the authorities act.

The reporters tried to find a cooperative Jilin officer, reporter Hu Kai told *Chengshi Wanbao*, a Jilin-based newspaper. However, through interviewing prospective drivers only, the team proved sales were an open secret in Jilin City.

Second investigation

In August 2002, the reporters returned to Jilin to build evidence. This time, they found someone who would like to say more. An officer from the traffic police branch, who declined to give his name, told them that Han Xiujuan, a police officer with the driving license

Deadly Driving Scandal

Newspaper undercover investigation proves Jilin City Police sold licences



Tang Tianhe

Photo by Yang Wei

administration office, had secretly engraved a set of seals needed to issue driving licences.

He told the reporters Gu Zhanxin, the former head of the vehicle administration office, was involved as well. But the officer reminded reporters that their investigation would not be easy.

"I think that without the support from the heads of the higher leadership, Han and Gu would not dare sell driving licences," said the officer. "If so, then an invisible umbrella will make it impossible for you to trace the story

to its real source."

Driving schools

The reporters took the officer's advice and began investigating driving schools instead. They went to Jilin Driving School as it was connected to the Jilin City Police Bureau. Their source had told them the school's business license had already been revoked by the local commercial and industry administration bureau, but police had somehow been able to keep the school running.

The reporters pretended to be applicants. A member of staff

told them, "Don't worry, our manager is a relative of the leader of the traffic police branch." He said the school had helped many applicants obtain driving licences without taking the test. The school sold about 600 driving licences a year, he said.

At Fengshun Driving School, Ju Jing, the manager, received them. He gave the reporters three copies of health check-up forms already stamped and signed. He told them to fill out their names and supply pictures for a license. He even tried to sell blank ap-

proval forms signed by Zhao Encai, director of the traffic police. "Give me a 1,000 kuai and I'll have your license done," he said.

But both officials refused to tell the reporters the names of their relatives or friends in the traffic police. They got their breakthrough at Jilin Tonglian Automobile Shop, where the receptionist revealed his boss, Zhao Weiming, was husband of Han Xiujuan, an official at the office of the driving license administration.

He said not only licences could be fixed. The shop could also help

out with automobile registration and title documents. The shop could also restore the licences of drivers who had been struck off, the staff member told them.

The closer they got to the truth, the more difficult the investigation. The reporters found out that even though they had collected sufficient evidence, they could not expose the scandal because the interests of the corrupt officers, the driving schools and the drivers who bought licences were inextricably linked together. No one would talk.

Jilin driver kills 17

The reporters returned to Beijing but kept an eye on Jilin, waiting for an opportunity to take the officers to court.

On January 28, 2003, a coach from Jilin City skidded off the highway in the Changping Section, Beijing of the Harbin-Dalian Highway (from Harbin, Heilongjiang Province to Dalian, Liaoning Province) Highway. Seventeen people died. The police found the licensed driver, from Jilin City, had not sat a driving test. *Guangming Daily* immediately came to the scene and reported this key fact. It was not published in the newspaper, but instead published in an internal reference report for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in August 2003. As expected, it got the leaders' attention.

Luo Gan, a member of the standing committee of the Central Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China and Zhou Yongkang, director of the Ministry of the Public Security, demanded Jilin City investigate sales of driving licences.

Bribes and more bribes

Head of Jilin Traffic Police Gu Zhanxin, his deputy Tang Tianhe, driving test official Xiong Haitao and Officers Han Xiujuan and Zhao Encai were tried in various cities last week.

Yang Wei, a reporter for *Xinhun Huabao*, another Jilin-based newspaper, who participated in the court hearing of Tang Encai told *Beijing Today* that Tang withdrew his confession at court.

He stood accused of accepting 204,400 yuan in bribes from Gu Zhanxin and Xiong Haitao for selling 56 driving licences and could not account for more than 900,000 yuan. At the hearing, Tang said the 900,000 yuan were gifts sent by other units and officers on the holiday.

Yang Wei told *Beijing Today*, "When I talked to some relatives of the suspect when the court hearing finished, they complained that the sale of driving licences is not unique to Jilin City.

"They also thought it was unfair for the court to accuse him of taking bribes by using his 900,000 yuan grey income for which he could not account."

The trial of six driving school managers will begin next Monday.

One Flew over the Shanghai Cuckoo's Nest

Men in white coats allegedly imprison grieving parents

By Dai Dunfeng/Wang Fang

A grieving couple says they were imprisoned inside a locked ward in the Shanghai Psychiatric Health Center for nearly two months after trying to settle a dispute over the center's role in the suicide of their depressed daughter.

The mother, 53, was later proved psychiatrically sound by hospitals in Qingdao and Beijing. But while at the center, she says she was tied up by doctors for three days and coerced into the schizophrenia ward for 22 days.

The daughter had committed suicide in September 2003 after six years' treatment at the Shanghai Psychiatric Health Center. Having collected evidence of her daughter's treatment, the mother and her husband — who both refused to be named — held the Center responsible. But the Center informed them their daughter's doctor only leased a counter position from the Center. Thus, the Center maintained it could not be held responsible. The couple went to Shanghai twice to negotiate, but the Center stuck to its argument.

Third visit

When they visited a third time, the father, who was suffering depression, decided to see a doctor. Xiao Zeping, director of the Center, received them. After chatting with the father, Dr Xiao found that whenever the mother mentioned her recently dead daughter, she could not help crying and leaning against her husband's shoulder.

Dr Xiao next recommended the mother and the father both receive therapy in the No.2 Ward in the East Wing. The father was made legal guardian of his wife and vice-versa by the hospital.

The No.2 Ward in the East Wing of the Center was open to patients' relatives. The majority of patients there suffer from depression or light compulsive

disorder. A depressed 20-year-old woman was staying in the same ward as the mother.

The woman said: "The patients in the ward all thought [the mother] was sane. She was just very sad when she thought about her daughter, that's all." She said the mother did not stir any trouble.

Quarrel

The Center held a meeting with 30 patients on the morning of May 25 seeking their opinions about noise from the nearby construction site. The couple and the depressed woman were present.

The 20-year-old recalled that apart from complaining about the noise to a Center representative, the father also mentioned his daughter's death. The representative allegedly shouted at him: "Your daughter did not see the doctor here. We are not responsible at all."

The mother rushed at the representative and tried to drag him to the director's office. Finally, the representative pushed her to the ground.

"I was angry and kicked him," admitted the mother.

After returning to the ward, the mother kept crying. She says a doctor found a fruit knife on her bed at about 1 pm. She says the doctor asked her husband if he could put the knife in his pocket to "protect your wife from harming herself". But the knife had belonged to their daughter and so was a treasured item.

Twenty minutes later, Dr Zhang Haiyin brought in five security guards, announcing they were moving her to another ward. When they brought her to No. 3 Ward in the North Wing, she says the couple suddenly realized this ward was for severe psychiatric patients. She alleges the guards then grabbed her as she tried to run away.

The Center called the police. On the same day, the couple was coercively admitted by Shanghai



Shanghai Psychiatric Health Center

Photo by Dai Dunfeng

"All she could do was lie in bed, watching rats running on the floor."

Psychiatric Health Center and Xu Hui Psychiatric Health Center. In the admittance file issued by Xuhui Police to the father, it said, "[The couple] hurt the doctors at 10 am on May 25, 2004 by throwing chairs and threatening them with a knife."

The mother says the police didn't show her any file on her own admittance. The 20-year-old witness to the incident stated she never saw either of the couple threaten the doctors with a knife at the meeting. But as to the situation in No. 3 Ward, only those involved know the truth.

The father insists "the knife was in my pocket". But the Center would not comment on whether he threatened them with a knife.

Jail

From May 25, the mother

was kept in No. 3 Ward in the North Wing for 22 days.

"They tied up my hands and feet on the bed and changed my clothes in front of all the patients. They even took away my jade necklace."

She buried her head in her hands, sobbing: "They injected glucose solution when I went on hunger strike in protest and they did not untie the cords to let me go to the toilet. When I was thirsty, they did not give me any water."

She said all she could do was lie in bed, watching rats running on the floor.

At first, the Center allegedly did not allow her to call anybody. She said, "I begged them to let me call my 86-year-old mother. Three nurses tied my hands, dragging me to the telephone. They did not allow me to maintain any dignity."

She said she was finally untied on May 27 when friends of her daughter came to the Center to visit her. One of the visitors allegedly said, "When we first saw her, she was lying in bed facing the toilet in the corridor." The mother told them she had been fasting three days.

She said the Center had later allowed her to make a daily call to her husband. But when-

ever they talked about their daughter, the Center cut the line. A doctor at the Center said in order to protect the schizophrenic patient from harming herself or others, they had no choice but to tie her up.

'They restricted my freedom'

After leaving the Center, she went to hospitals in Qingdao and Beijing to see if she was sick. Examinations proved she was not, she says.

"The doctor of the Shanghai Center only treated me as a psychiatric patient because I had been in dispute with them over my daughter's death," said the mother.

According to Article 27 of the Shanghai Psychiatric Health Regulations, doctors with a conflict of interest over a patient should not administer treatment.

"The Center did not ask for agreement from either me or my guardian, my husband, and then they did not have the right to throw me into the closed-door ward," she said.

A hospital spokesman said: "[Her] husband signed the medical records when she was accepted by the hospital on April 20. The signature was still valid when she was moved to a locked ward."

But lawyer Jiang Weizhong of the Yangguang Law Office in Shanghai, doesn't agree. "The Constitution empowers only a judicial authority to restrict citizens' freedom. The doctors broke the law when they sent the patient from the open ward to the locked ward without permission from either the guardian or the police."

The mother said: "If psychiatrists can easily force people to receive therapy in locked wards by claiming they are psychiatrically sick, the world would be a horrible place."

The mother is now suing Shanghai Psychiatric Center. (From Southern Weekend)

'I really wish that every person living in the city could go to live in the mountains for a whole year to gain close contact with nature. Coming back, you would feel very differently. You will reconsider your attitude to the life of animals and treat them as our equals. You'll be willing to protect them and become more tolerant.'

— Guo Yanli



There are fewer than 300 elephants in Yunnan Province, South China.

By Yan Zhang and Hester Xu
On her first day on the job, Guo Yanli was chased by a herd of wild elephants.

Literally. Guo had heard a rumble in the Yunnan Province jungle and snuck over for a peek. Suddenly, there they were: all eight of them strolling towards her across a jungle clearing of the Mengyang Nature Reserve.

A female elephant locked her sights on Guo, 26. And so that's how she ended up running for her life, herd at her heels, in Wild Elephant Valley on September 19 last year.

"It's not really surprising that a few locals get trampled to death by angry elephants each year," she says, smiling. Guo had been "very lucky", according to locals. Most visitors don't get to see an elephant for at least a month.

The graduate of Beijing Normal University has now rejoined her husband Wu Yugang and is writing her thesis on living among the 300 elephants in the primeval forest of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in south Yunnan Province.

Guo majors in animal behavior, observing their ingestion, defense and other behavioural patterns to help find suitable ways of protecting elephants. Her supervisor, Professor Zhang Li, has been leading an unprecedented field research program to observe wild Asian elephant herds living in China with sponsorship from the International Fund of Animal Welfare (IFAW).

During the year, Guo recorded 50 sightings of elephants, that included nine or 10 herds. Every time she sees an elephant, Guo says, she feels "a rush of tenderness and affection."

Guo was able to recognize and nickname individual elephants in the herd: *Zuo Du* – "left single" – for the elephant with only one tusk on the left, or *You Duan* – "right short" – for the elephant with a shorter tusk on the right.

"I quickly realized elephants were afraid of human beings and got nervous whenever there



Guo Yanli says she grew accustomed to the local food in the Mengyang Nature Reserve in Xishuangbanna, "although it was quite sour."

Photos provided by Guo Yanli

Student Misses Her Elephants

Pledges to return to Yunnan



"I tried to keep quiet," says Guo, who made 50 sightings of elephants for her field work on animal behavior.

were people nearby making noise. But they would relax and cut loose whenever people weren't around.

"So I tried to keep quiet every time I saw the elephants so as not to disturb their natural behavior," she explains in a professional stage whisper, as if an elephant might be lurking in the corridors of the Normal University biology department.

Hard times in the forest

Guo never anticipated her second-biggest problem: finding a place to stay. She worked alone in the Mengyang Nature Reserve, a famous tourist attraction 35 kilometers from Jinghong, the county capital.

The only places available there were cosy 480 yuan-a-night cabins built for tourists staying in the Wild Elephant Valley. For her first month, Guo had to make a daily commute between Mengyang and Jinghong to work with park staff and officials from the reserve.

Finally, she was offered a bamboo shed with a leaking roof recently abandoned by bureau staff. With an outside toilet. For 100 yuan a night.

Guo walked to the park office three kilometres away and asked a member of staff for help.

"What good are you? What economic benefit do you bring to us? I might consider giving you a room if you worked here as a cleaner," came the friendly local reply.

A change in management brought a change in luck two weeks later and Guo had soon struck a deal for her bamboo condo beside a banyan tree in Wild Elephant Valley. In exchange for the free accommodation, Guo worked as a tourist guide, park staff trainer and teacher of wild animal conservation to local people.

The jungle is humid during the rainy season between March and September. Her room grew moldy and washed clothes sim-

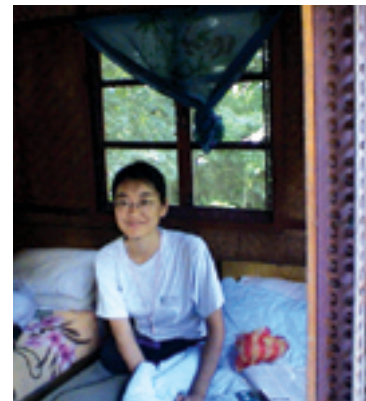
ply wouldn't dry for weeks. Although the reserve is in a tropical zone, the winter was cold and wet.

Mosquitoes and unthinkable creep-crawlies preyed on Guo. "Once my fingers got bitten by an ant and became badly swollen. After telling my husband what had happened on telephone, I had a good cry," she chuckles. "And the first time I was bitten by leeches shortly after arriving in the reserve, I was frightened seeing my trouser legs soaked in blood. But now I'm used to them that I could play them in my hand like the locals."

With no newspapers or TV, she had nothing to do after dinner but to wait for the elephants to come.

Lonely summer nights

The greatest problem was the loneliness. Night in the jungle, she says, was either absolutely still or filled with the chorus of animal cries. At first, she was afraid. Fear soon gave



Inside her jungle cabin in Xishuangbanna for almost a year.

way to loneliness.

"The only thing I could do was talk to my husband on a mobile phone. We spoke about 50 minutes every day and I got all my outside news through this only channel," she says.

For Guo, a native of Chifeng, a small city in Inner Mongolia, the isolation and hardship had its own reward: an opportunity to get closer to nature. "I never really liked Beijing," she says.

"Life is hard there, but not as bad as you may imagine. Most of the time, I felt very happy. Whenever the elephants came within five kilometres of my house, I would immediately stop what I was doing and rush out to meet them, even when I was talking with my husband on the mobile phone! I did feel lonely at that time, but it was absolutely worth it."

Matriarchal society

One day, Guo was observing a herd of 12 elephants bathing in the river. With people around, the mother elephant usually shields the calf. But this time, with no one in sight, the adults wandered downstream and left the calf alone. About an hour later, an old bull elephant came to the river.

The other adult elephants were startled and ran, leaving the calf alone by the riverside. Paying little attention to what had just happened, the calf continued to play about in the water while the menacing bull drank from the river. A few minutes later, the mother elephant returned to the scene. Treading cautiously around the bull, she positioned herself between the stranger and the calf and then let out a loud trumpet.

A few minutes later, another female elephant appeared. Walking around the bull in identical fashion, she moved to the other side of the calf. Thus the two adult female elephants guarded the calf from both sides. A moment later, the bull left. The other cows trumpeted and joined the three at the river.

"You see, elephants are incredibly intelligent animals," says Guo. "Each herd is a ma-

triarchal society and consists of only cows and calves. They can communicate with each other and have a strong maternal love for the children."

Elephants never attack humans on their own accord, she explains. Most deaths and injuries in the area occurred when elephants were startled by rubber collectors working at night or provoked by people trying to follow them.

"The elephants are trying to adapt to people living there, but we people aren't doing much adapting ourselves."

The local people have tried really hard to protect the animals, she says. "But it's unfair to ask them to shoulder the full burden of conservation by sacrificing their own livelihoods. It should be our duty as a society to protect the fewer than 300 elephants remaining in China."

Jumbo traffic problem

The herd she had met on the first day reappeared again about 2 pm, preparing to cross a highway that runs through the conservation area. Locals and tourists gathered to watch. The elephants screamed and tried to scatter the crowd.

Traffic proved too heavy and no vehicle would stop for the herd. At 6 pm, the elephants were still waiting. The situation was tense. Guo and company decided to act.

"We first persuaded the bystanders to leave and then we walked onto the highway to stop the traffic and let the elephants pass. Later, I discovered it's quite normal for wild elephants to cross the highway."

"Because of their big appetite, they have to get food in different places inside the reserve. With the highway running through the middle, the elephants have no choice but to cross the road to find more food on the other side."

She applauds local government efforts to protect the animal. "When they built a road that runs through the nature reserve to improve the local economy, the roadworks left a steep cliff which made it impossible for elephants to cross, and so they built an underground tunnel to let the elephants pass."

It is not only an elephant that never forgets. One day, Guo promises, she will return.

"I really wish that every person living in the city could go to live in the mountains for a whole year to gain close contact with nature. Coming back, you would feel very differently. You will reconsider your attitude to the life of animals and treat them as our equals. You'll be willing to protect them and become more tolerant."

Korean Wave Sweeps the Screen



Everybody Has Secret hit the screen with a new depiction of sexual relations South Korean style.

By Jessie Jiang

It all seemed to happen overnight. Teenage boys are crazy about a game called Legend, girls are screaming for the recitals of JTL and HOT and your office colleagues are planning a *hanguo liaoli* after work.

Meanwhile, after *My Sassy Girl* becomes a catchword for all suffering boyfriends, after *Museum* and *Zoo* come to stand for opposite ideas about love from two genders, after Shiri is applauded as the only Asian box office miracle standing against *Titanic*... anyone can see that a big, powerful Korean Wave has arrived on the screen.

Korean films, like many other elements of Korean culture, are irrevocably making their impact on Asian and even world popular culture. Some call it a "renaissance" to echo the golden times of *Barefooted Youth* and Shin Sung-il and Um Aeng-ran in the 1960s, but it is more than that. In terms of volume, market, diversity or maturity, the Korean film industry has reached an unprecedented height in just a few years.

Since the 1980s, Korean films have won recognition in many international film festivals including Venice, Locarno, Shanghai, Melbourne and Cannes. Praise and awards are showered upon such films as Gwontae's *Ssibadi* and *Seopyeonje*, Bae Yonggyoon's *The Reason Why the Dalma Went East* and Pak Chan-wook's *Old Boy*. But what is more visible is the great success of Korean blockbusters in commercial terms, notably *Shiri* (1999), *JSA* (2000), *My Sassy Girl* (2001), *My Wife is a Gangster* (2001), *Chingu* (2002), *The Way Home* (2002), *Memory of Murder* (2003), *Silmido* (2003) and *Taegukgi* (2004).

From 1998 to 2002, the number of cinema-goers in Korea increased from 50.18 million to 105 million, among which the number of viewers of domestic films tripled. Korean films now count for about 53 percent of the domestic market and have generated \$30.98 million in foreign markets with more than 164 films exported every year. The total sales revenue of the Korean film industry has tripled over five years to \$ 3.15 billion.

The momentum of Korean filmmaking readily reminds one of the Red Devil cheer squad in the World Cup, with bugles, drums and roaring confidence for victory. But how did this happen?

The magical rise of Korean films is largely attributed to the strong governmental support it receives. For 35 years, Korea has practiced a "screen quota" policy which requires Korean cinemas to screen domestically produced films 146 days a year, or 40 percent of the time. And the actual composition of domestic films last year actually reached 53 percent. Although this policy has aroused great argument from Hollywood filmmakers, the Korean government has never loosened its grip upon this aspect.

"The screen quota system maintained Korea's cultural identity and diversity. ... our cinema should not be judged only by market principles," wrote an alliance of actors and directors in a recent public statement. In 1999, hundreds of Korean filmmakers even shaved their heads in a gesture of protest against what they described as an influx of Hollywood films.

Apart from the screen quota, a government-supported committee for the promotion of Korean films is also actively sponsoring the industry and independent directors. Every year about 30-40 films are directly and indirectly subsidized by the committee, with no governmental interference in their content.

Hosting international film festivals is another initiative to raise the international profile of Ko-



My Sassy Girl, a Korean creation blending romance and a funny plot.



Ghost House, even in a ghost story, there's still something to laugh about.



An Old Boy without plastic surgery can also pocket riches and international prizes.



The huge money throw into Taegukgi is indicative of South Korean filmmakers to make their mark on the world film battlefield.

rean films. The Busan International Film Festival seeks to act as a bridge between the audience and filmmakers, the Jeonju International Film Festival centers on the development of digital films, and the PiFan, Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival deals with fantasy films as its subject. From these festivals, more and more audiences are attracted to the bustling scene of the Korean film industry.

Favorable environment has blessed the Korean filmmakers with unparalleled conditions for creation. With such rapid development of the film community, the Chungmuro and Jongno area have also become famous as a hub of filmmakers and cinema-goers. At the same time, multiplex cinemas and theaters have also been built, including Danseongsa (practically a sacred place for film lovers), Daehan Theater, Seoul Theater and Hollywood Theater.

At the end of *Silmido*, cornered and desperate, the remnant members of Special Unit 684 write down their names on a bus in blood, crying "We're not nobody!" This poignant symbol of people trying to etch their names in history strikes the chord underlying many Korean filmmakers' creativity. As they take up their film-making mission as both a commercial and a political responsibility, the quest for identity and diversity has never ceased.

One can find a spectrum of Korean cultures in the wide array of films. In *Chihwaseon*, the life and death of Seung-up Jang, a brilliant painter of the late Joseon era, is captured in a most authentic oriental aura of freedom and serenity, and age-old rituals are revived in full color and vitality. In *Peppermint Candy*, the abhorrence of war and cruelty underlying the national spirit of post-war Korean citizens is best exemplified in a seemingly powerless hero. In *Christmas in August*, an otherwise cliched story of lovers separated by death are depicted in typical Korean-style charm and sweetness, making it a model for pure Asian-style love. In *Taegukgi*, the smoke of the Korean War permeates the life of ordinary citizens and is commorated with deep emotion.

"The best thing with Korean film is that it never seeks to please a specific festival or jury or authority, it is open-minded, absorptive, and respectful to the audience." A Chinese critic noted in one of the numerous seminars on Korean film industry held in China. "One can easily make the excuse that Korean filmmakers are lucky, but if they dare not take bold initiatives and experiment, they will never succeed in being different."

The independent character of Korean films is best reflected in its short films. Every year in Busan, Jeonju, PiFan and Puchon, experimental and independent films compete in their diversity and boldness, signifying a broad future ahead of this booming career. From horror films to animation, the theme and technique are varying greatly.

The Korean filmmakers have a vision, to become "one of the five strongest film-making nations of the world." Many may scoff at such a bold goal, but, given their recent progress, the possibility of their succeeding can certainly not be dismissed out of hand.

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What's on DVD

By Sabu



Three...Extremes

Following the huge success of *Project Three*, *Project Three...Extremes* once again teams up creative talents from three Asian countries in Hong Kong's *Dumplings*, Korea's *Cut* and Japan's *Box*. With an outstanding production team including Fruit Chan, Peter Chan, Christopher Doyle and Lillian Lee, *Three...Extremes* brings back the horror by a story of rejuvenation. Cantonese and Mandarin with English and Chinese subtitles. DVD 5



The Stepford Wives

An all-star cast remakes the 1975 thriller, *The Stepford Wives*, starring Nicole Kidman and Matthew Broderick. The story involves a married couple moving from Manhattan to the suburb of Stepford, Connecticut where they find the wives are perfectly groomed, cheerful, and subservient to their husbands, and something strange is going on. English with Chinese, French and Spanish subtitles. DVD 5



Les Triplets De Belleville

Revolving around the theme of non-stop change, Sylvain Chomet's ambitious animated feature tells the story of an adventurous rescue coup. Two nominations at the Oscars last year, this animated film presents original surprises and brilliant creativity, which promises to keep you mesmerized from start to finish. French with English and Chinese subtitles. DVD 5



Bernice Coppieters (*Juliet*)'s movement always seems to extend well beyond her elegant body. Photo by Cui Jun

By Jacqueline Yu

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* is such a classic, and Prokofiev's score for the ballet so familiar, it is difficult to imagine a production that would register as strikingly different.

Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo's *Romeo and Juliet* at Tianqiao Theater last weekend forced a reassessment of that idea. Dancers retold the story in a way that seemed both modern and traditional, and more subtle. And while the tragedy of the story was no less heart breaking, I also found myself fascinated in the way this production sheds a new light on Beijing's ballet stage.

In a literal sense, the new light was the pure white stage – no sign of the usual sixteenth-century Italian city sets. Two luminous white panels are moved for key scene changes, and a ramp at the back of the stage is raised to represent the balcony of Juliet's bedroom.

There are only two pieces of black – one is hung over one of the white panels during the Capulet's ball, representing the family crest; the other is in the bedroom scene, as the bed

Juliet and Romeo share, and an important prop used later by Romeo.

There is no poison, there are no swords. Both Lords Capulet and Montague are missing in the action of this version, and Romeo does not even take the time to kill Paris (finding Juliet not loving him, Paris simply walks off the stage with dignity).

Choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot meanwhile has enriched and made more youthful the roles of Lady Capulet, Juliet's Nurse and Friar Laurence.

Friar Laurence, who is usually played by an old man with no dancing responsibilities, is in this production, like the Nurse, a beautiful (if cold-faced), tall young dancer. He is not just a storyteller, but an actual participant, while at the same time an angel who looks down from the heavens on this terrible story.

Though the program shows Bernice Coppieters' Juliet as the traditional long haired young Italian girl, last weekend in Beijing, we saw a revolutionary heroine. When the

now short haired Juliet undid her nightgown to show her Nurse her mature breast (with her back to the audience), the Chinese audience seemed somewhat stunned. This Juliet is less a girl than a vibrant, strong and sexy woman, and while her boyish appearance made her look sometimes as if she might suddenly jump on a bicycle and ride off with Romeo, choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot never let the contemporary idea go so far that it might threaten to overwhelm the classic's original fire.

Maillot's romantic sensibility shines in his pas de deux between the lovers. Coppieters' long limbs are used to her advantage – her movement always seems to extend well beyond her elegant body. Chris Roelandt plays a charming Romeo. Gradually swept up by desire, his all-too-brisk initiation into manhood is equally tender and heart-breaking to watch.

The star-crossed lovers break with tradition in the way they end their lives – the corner of the black bed serves as a knife for Romeo. Concealed

in his costume is a long red silk ribbon, which is later used by Juliet to hang herself. At this point, one begins to wonder why all those earlier versions wasted so much money on building elaborate sets of Italianate facades and garden landscapes. Coppieters dances the last scene bare-foot, lending a modern-dance color to the traditional piece.

It is impossible not to be dazzled by Jerome Kaplan's costumes (wispy slip-dresses and strapless gowns, and the two feuding families distinguished simply by the white or black they wear) and by Dominique Drillot's lighting.

In a cold, colorless setting, the dancers are forced to project their emotions to compensate for the lack of Renaissance wrappings.

This post-modern *Romeo and Juliet* most definitely would bear a second viewing, should it return to Beijing some time in the future.

More Than a Tragedy of Two Lovers

WORLDWIDE

Sideways Brings Touch of Humanity to Hollywood

Tophy Grace, star of *Sideways*

Memo to Hollywood: Not all popular movies need splashy special effects, car chases, bloody battles, space races or death lasers to succeed.

In fact, none of these things happen in the widely praised, highly profitable human-scale films of Alexander Payne, the director of *Election* and *About Schmidt* who may be, as *People Magazine* recently put it, "the single most talented director of his generation."

The 43-year-old Payne's latest film, *Sideways*, has opened so far in a just few major markets but it is already on this year's must-see Oscar watch list in Hollywood. His reputation is built on films like *Sideways* – an unassuming buddy picture centering on two men with decidedly different views on love, sex, romance and wine. (Reuters)



Oscar Wilde

Trove of Oscar Wilde Material Auctioned

A handwritten chapter of Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, written by the author at the behest of his publishers and including the scandalous visit of the title character to an opium den, has been sold in London for \$132,000.

The heavily revised text was one of several pieces of memorabilia auctioned Friday on behalf of a private buyer by Sotheby's. A signed first edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* fetched \$770,000. The treasure trove of material, described by Sotheby's as "the finest collection of Oscar Wilde material remaining in pri-

vate hands," was sold for a total of \$1.5 million. (AP)



Olga Samoschenko: Anna Karenina Returns

It felt like one was watching a modern recreation of a novel by Tolstoy at the show of Olga Samoschenko, a very talented designer from Byelorussia who seems assured of a great future.

On the Olga Samoschenko Spring 2005 collection for Russian Fashion Week last Friday, where far too many Russian models flaunt their stuff foolishly on the catwalk; Samoschenko's gals behaved like real ladies. Samoschenko showed beautiful gauze jackets and coats, cut snugly to the body, trimmed with accordion pleat silk and finished with tiny pleats and puckers. She has a great sense of self-restraint. Where other local designers slam on heavy-handed embroidery, she used just the right amount of crystals, hand stitching and beading. (Fashion Wire Daily)

ABC to Hold Wife Swap Year Round



Wife Swap

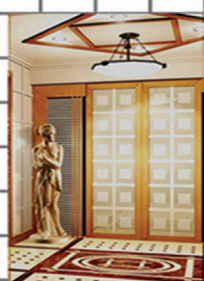
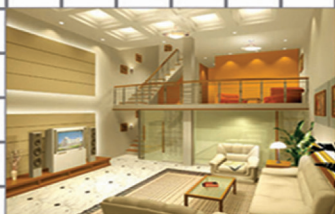
ABC has given the green light to a full season of its reality series *Wife Swap*, which has proved a solid performer in the competitive Wednesday 10 pm period against NBC's *Law and Order* and CBS' *CSI: NY*.

Along with other broadcast networks, ABC also took a half-step toward picking up a clutch of fledgling freshman series by handing out a number of additional script orders during the past week. But in general, the networks seem to be treading more cautiously this year than in the recent past when it comes to giving full-season pickups to new series performing in the fair-to-middling range. (Reuters)

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Making Money in the Middle



Li Yuanwei, director of basketball promotion and management at China's General Administration of Sport, was present on September 21 when two domestic sports promotion firms won rights to promote China Basketball Association games and events worldwide. After three months of open bidding, two native sports promoting companies won the sole rights. Photo by Photocom

By Xie Lixue

Sports is one of the world's biggest industries, and one has to look no further than the extreme enthusiasm of Chinese fans about football, basketball and table tennis to see the potential of the domestic athletics market. With the 2008 Beijing Olympics approaching, there may be no better time to get into this booming field.

It has been a heady few months for domestic sports fans. Following China's record gold haul at the Athens Olympics, many big events came to this country, arguably the most high profile of which were the China Open tennis tournament, two NBA preseason games and the first Formula 1 race in Shanghai.

And behind the scenes at all these events and others, making things happen, are a group of sometimes unsung and often very rich commercial heroes — the promoters and agents.

Who are promoters?

The term "sports promoter" or "agent" may be new to many people in China, but the position is familiar, mostly thanks to the international repute of Don Kong, the world-famous American boxing promoter. Professional promoters like King and individual agents are middlemen, standing between interests as representatives of athletes, events or sports organizations.

The business of sports promo-

tion and agency covers salary negotiations, team or coach selection, scheduling and managing competitions, commercial activities and molding athletes' images, Zhang Li, deputy director of the information department of China's General Administration of Sport said at a seminar in September.

"This industry has developed in China over the past decade. However, because of management structures, government restrictions and formerly low enthusiasm from society, it was hard for sports agents and promoters to develop their careers," Zhang added.

As a result, fewer than 100 people in China have obtained professional sports agent certifications issued by the sports administration and the Administration of Industry and Commerce.

Potential in China

The global sports market in 2003 was worth a whopping \$400 billion and is growing by 20 percent a year, according to a survey released by JP Morgan Research Center earlier this year.

In China, the volume of sport-related business is expected to reach 60 billion yuan this year and the 2008 Olympic Games are expected to generate 20 to 23 billion yuan in revenues for Beijing alone.

Zhang said the country would need at least 7,000 qualified agents and promoters within the next decade.

Wang Bo, an agent with Dongfang Tiyu Jingji, a domestic football agency, said profit potential in the sector was huge. Most Chinese football players command transfer fees of as much as 10 million yuan, 10 to 30 percent of which can be pocketed by an athlete's agent.

Qualifications and training

"You have to know business management, sports, laws, and a foreign language, preferably English," Zhang Junhui, a promoter with the China Open Promotion Company, was quoted as saying by *Beijing Youth Daily* in October in describing qualifications for agents and promoters.

"Honesty and commitment are also very, very important."

Yet many promoters and agents in China, including Wang Bo, do not have professional training or education.

That has led to the rapid rise of sports promotion as a pre-professional major in many sports-related schools.

"Sports management is currently our most popular department," Li Hongjiang, a professor at the Capital Institute of Physical Education told *Beijing Today*.

The Sport Agent Certificate is the only related diploma recognized in China. Holders must go through annual checks of their qualifications to make sure they are up to snuff on the latest in the field.

Jobs

A graduate of information management and systems from Huazhong S&T University in Wuhan, sophisticated in C/C++, VC6.0, VFP, Access, SQL Server, Activex and software developing, familiar with Flash, Photoshop, Excel, PP uses. Also familiar with medical English and Latin.
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(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info to: ayi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

Corporate HR

By Xie Lixue

Imagination and creativity give rise to create original products, and care and consideration are at the core of satisfactory service. For newly established NEC Telecom China, a branch company of technology giant NEC specially targeted at the telecommunications field, those four words embody corporate concepts for operations, management and recruitment.

On October 20, Cao Laijing, manager of the human resources department at NEC Telecom China, talked about the rapidly growing company with *Beijing Today*.

BT: What changes have been made since Lu Lei, a former manager at Motorola China, became president of the company?

Cao: Mr. Lu raised the suggestion that we organize the company with a parallel pattern suited to the IT market. We have also set becoming one

Imagination, Creativity and Care

— Interview with Cao Laijing, HR manager of NEC Telecom China



Photo by Xie Lixue

of the most reputable enterprises in the industry and making our employees and customers happy and comfortable as our long-term goals.

Inspired by our leaders, we recruited many talented professionals to form an outstanding management team. We continuously study Western corporations and strong methods at state or individual enterprises

to create a new corporate style in our telecom company.

BT: It's easy to see how people in operations can apply imagination and creativity to their work, but how can people in other posts also do so?

Cao: We have a saying that there are no ordinary positions, but only ordinary people. Many candidates that hear they have been offered reception positions are disappointed or unhappy because they think they deserve better positions. Actually, receptionists can have greater space for career and personal development than many others.

Once we had a receptionist who was good at drawing. As a result, she put up a lot of fun pictures in smoking rooms, restrooms or meeting rooms

instead of the typical boring reminders of corporate rules. She enjoyed her job and worked very hard.

Though some people look at training or salaries as the most important factors for keeping talented employees, job enjoyment and satisfaction are the most crucial points.

BT: What kinds of qualities are most suitable for prospective employees at your company?

Cao: We look for dynamic professionals with global perspectives. Since there is often little difference between strong candidates' knowledge and skills, we choose staff based on their emotional quotient, or EQ.

When conducting interviews, we try to emphasize personal stories over sweeping

generalizations. Many people like to make big statements, at which point I ask them questions to narrow the focus to the point where they show their personality.

One candidate insisted he was good at communicating with people, but he just kept talking and did not give me a chance to get into the conversation. So can you say he is a good communicator? Certainly not.

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.
Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.
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Please send resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com.

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今日北京

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Holland has attracted students from many different countries eager to further their education, partly because it was the first non-English speaking nation to offer English-taught university courses. Today, most classes in the Netherlands are taught in English, whether for foreign or native students.

"The Dutch government is working very hard to adopt a new set of policies and measures to make it again more attractive for foreign students to go to the Netherlands for study purposes," said Robert van Kan, managing director of the Netherlands Education Support Office Beijing (NESO Beijing), this Tuesday while participating in the Study Abroad Salon.

Van Kan added that the Dutch government would establish a major new scholarship program to help foreign students finance their studies. "It is the aim of these new policies not only to give opportunities to overseas students, but we would also like to make use of the knowledge and experience that foreign students bring with them to the Netherlands."

Basics of studying in Holland:

Can you give us reasons why students should choose the Netherlands as their destination for furthering their education? — JackieZhang

In the Netherlands we have done research on why international students from all over the world choose to go to the Netherlands to study. The most important reasons are as follows:

1. International environment. At the universities and schools, we have many foreign students and teachers. The Netherlands is very close to many other countries. Many students spend part of their study time in other European countries, for instance for internships. To study in the Netherlands not only gives you a Dutch, but also a very European, international perspective.

2. English level. In our country, most of the education is taught in English, not only for foreign students but also for the Dutch students. In addition, 95 percent of the Dutch population speaks English, so both in your studies and your social life, you will hardly encounter language problems.

3. Quality. Dutch higher education is known for its very high quality. Almost of all our schools are public schools that are under strict quality supervision from the government.

4. Expenses. The costs of studying in the Netherlands are very reasonable compared to many other countries, especially English speaking countries. For a bachelor's program, expect to spend around 80,000 renminbi per year, including tuition fees and living expenses. For a master's program, the expenses will be around 120,000 to 150,000 renminbi.

5. Degrees. In the Netherlands, we have an education system with bachelor's and master's degrees, just like in the UK, US and China. Dutch degrees are protected by law, recognized all over the world and highly valued by employers everywhere.

6. Teaching methods. Many Dutch schools use a very modern and effective teaching method, called problem-based learning. Students not only learn a lot of knowledge, but more importantly, they learn how to solve problems and to deal with real situations in life and the workplace.

How many kinds of programs are offered at Dutch universities? — horse

Dutch schools and universities offer almost 1,500 programs and courses in the



Tulips, windmills and clogs are the most famous symbols of the Netherlands, but the country's quality education system is equally worthy of reputation.



English language. That is more than any other non-native English country in the world!

Among those 1,500 programs, you can choose from preparatory courses to master's and PhD programs in every field of study, from economics and business to agriculture and environment, law, science and technology, engineering, medical science and social sciences.

What are the famous or strong academic majors in Dutch universities? — roumi

Holland is of course especially renowned for its education in engineering, particularly at the three famous universities of technology in Delft, Eindhoven and Twente. The Netherlands is also considered the international law capital of the world with the International Court of Justice and the International War Crimes Tribunal, so the law programs in the Netherlands are of the highest international level. Holland is also known as a country of international traders, so all the latest knowledge on trade, management, economics and finance is taught at our schools.

Costs and living expenses:

How much can students expect to spend on tuition fees and living costs? — message

Tuition fees vary from university to university and from program to program.

Most bachelor's programs cost anywhere from 2,000 to 4,500 euro per year, which is 20,000 to 45,000 renminbi. Master's programs are a bit more expensive, from 4,500 euro (45,000 renminbi) to 10,000 euro (100,000 renminbi).

Living expenses for most Chinese students are around 50,000 renminbi per year, including accommodation and food.

Do Dutch universities arrange home-stay for students? What are the costs like? — page10

Home-stay is not very typical in the Netherlands. Once you have been admitted by a Dutch university, that university will arrange accommodation for you in dormitories or student houses. So accommodation is always guaranteed.

Many students prefer to look for a student room on the housing market after they have arrived. The university may help you with that or refer you to housing agencies for students. The school will also help you with other formalities, such as arranging medical insurance, applying for a

residence permit or opening a bank account.

In Holland, students usually have their own room and they share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. The costs vary from simple to luxurious rooms and also from city to city. I think it is fair to calculate that you may spend 200 euro per month on housing. Dutch universities do not have campuses — university building are scattered around town and you will live among the Dutch people.

Admission and language requirements:

What are admission requirements at Dutch universities? Do we have to take any language examinations? — weislee

In general, to enroll for a bachelor's program at a Dutch school, you must at least have finished senior high school in China. Because of the high level and quality of education in the Netherlands, some schools may require that you already have one year of college education or you must follow a prep-course for a period of time to be admitted.

For a master's program, of course you must have finished a bachelor's program, in most cases in a relevant field of study. Several schools and universities also offer prep-courses to prepare you for successful admission to master's programs.

In all cases, you must be able to show that you have sufficient English language skills. The Dutch government requests that Chinese students do the IELTS test before they can apply for a study visa. For bachelor's programs, you are required to have an IELTS score of 6.0, while most master's programs require 6.5.

Specific programs may have specific requirements. For instance, some courses may require a GMAT or GRE score. Some MBA programs require a number of years of relevant working experience. Many schools also hold admission interviews in China.

Chinese students in Holland:

How many Chinese students are in the Netherlands now? What do you think of them? — tea tea

Most of the students from China are very bright and clever, they are ambitious and work very hard. Of course every teacher would like to have these students.

There are about 7,000 Chinese students in the Netherlands now. The majority is doing very well. Chinese students are often the best of

their class. Many have already graduated and they have continued their studies or started their careers. More and more are also coming back to China.

We consider the Chinese students in the Netherlands as ambassadors for the Netherlands wherever they go after their studies.

Scholarships, part-time jobs and medical care:

Do universities in Holland provide scholarships, especially for international students? How can students apply for scholarships? — transport

There are various types of scholarships available to Chinese students.

The Delta Scholarship Program was designed especially for Chinese students. You can apply for a Delta scholarship once you have been accepted by a school in the Netherlands. You must submit your application to the school directly. The scholarship covers part of the expenses of your studies. Hundreds of students have received Delta scholarships in the last few years.

Other scholarships programs include the Netherlands Fellowship Program (NFP) and the Huygens Scholarship Program.

These are full-scholarship programs, aimed at graduate students.

For more information, you can go to our website www.nesobeijing.com or to www.studyin.nl

Can students get part-time jobs in Holland? — Red Stick

Foreign students are allowed to work in the Netherlands during their studies. You can legally work for 10 hours per week during study semesters and during holidays there are no limitations. It is fair to say that especially students who follow master's programs may find it very difficult to combine their studies with a part-time job.

Do universities in Holland provide medical care for international students? — cookie

The medical system in Holland is very developed. Everyone in the Netherlands, including students from China, is required to have medical insurance. Once you have been admitted by a Dutch university and you have arrived in Holland, the university will help you to register with one of the insurance companies that provide student insurance. With this insurance, you are covered for virtually any medical treatment.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

Ask Ayi:

Q: My son is 16 and in his second year of high school. He is a very talented violinist and interested in studying music in Austria. So, I want to know about Austrian policies towards Chinese students regarding music studies, including the professional knowledge and skills required and standards of recruitment.

— liulipingen

A: Austrian universities recommend every music student first finish their schooling in China and then pursue higher education at an Austrian music school.

To gain admission to an Austrian music school, you have to pass tests of musical skills. For detailed information, check the homepages of different Austrian universities, such as the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna at www.mdw.ac.at, the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz at www.kug.ac.at, and University Mozarteum Salzburg at www.moz.ac.at.

The world famous Wiener Konservatorium has free tuition and may be a very good choice for your son.

Q: I just graduated from a preparatory school this year. Although I majored in business English, I want to get a master's degree in psychology in Australia. Is it possible?

— baisarahi

A: You cannot enroll directly in a master's degree course in Australia because graduates of preparatory schools must first get a bachelor's degree at an Australian university before applying for graduate school. Undergraduate courses in Australia take three years, and you will need an IELTS score of at least six to get a visa.

The University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney have strong psychology programs, but like many top Australian universities, they have recently raised their tuition fees.

Q: I am a middle school music teacher and intend to further my musical studies in Austria. Do they have teacher training colleges? — cyling

A: There are eight state teacher training colleges in Austria — Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Styria and Carinthia — and six private teacher training colleges, five maintained by the dioceses of Graz, Innsbruck, Linz, St. Polten and Vienna and one by a foundation in Burgenland.

These colleges offer six-semester programs to qualify people to teach music at secondary schools. Besides theoretical education, a special emphasis is put on gaining practical experience in schools.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

By Gareth George

"It's alive!" screamed Al, our tightly wound photographer, on Halloween eve. An alabaster mask of fear with glasses, his outstretched arm aimed rigid as a withered branch at the scorpion just meters away (held in place by a thin stake driven through its tail).

They say terror is purely subjective. One man's fear is another man's fantasy. And with this in mind, along with a ghoulish helping of masochism, we four wide-eyed, backpack-toting *laowai* found ourselves in Wangfujing preparing to consume what some call "food"...and others call "shriek kebabs".

First we sat down to discuss the kind of terrifying foods sure to strike fear into the heart and sicken us to our weedy stomachs. We rejected chicken's feet as too commonplace to be scary. Black tree fungus was considered too rubbery to be from hell. Even the tastebud-numbing filth at Chinese Burger's Home fell by the wayside, despite "its innocuous looks disguising true evil, like when you see a serial killer in real life."

It had to be something "with its skeleton on the outside." Preferably "the sort of thing you wouldn't even want to touch." Proceed directly below, dear readers, to discover what made up our Halloween Feast of the Dead...

Seahorse:

Amount consumed:

1/2 of 1 Taster's

comments: "Bony."

"Tastes salty. Maybe

fishy, but I could be

imagining it." "Taste

won't go away.

Disgusting." Movie

equivalent: *Creature**from the Black La-**goon Food or fiend?*

Fiend.

Grubs: Amount

consumed: 1 of 4

Taster's comments: "Squishy. Salty."

"Proper ming-

ging." "Soft. And horrible." Movie equivalent: *Star-**ship Troopers Food or fiend?*

Fiend.

Scorpion: Amount consumed: 2 of 4 Taster's

comments: "Crunchy and salty."

"Chewy on

the inside. Strange gooey insides are off-putting."

"Dry." Movie equivalent: *Alien. Food or fiend?*

Food "if one has to be."

Silk worms: Amount consumed: 4 of 4 (3

1/2 by a passing beggar) Taster's comments:

"Doughy." "Sponge-like."

"Smells of poo. Gets in

your beard." Movie equivalent: *The Blob. Food or**fiend?* Fiend.

Creep Chow



Blimey!

Photo by Alastair Hill

Beet Back the Cold



Borscht, 12 yuan

By Tom Spearman

A superb alternative to the sometimes mediocre, often over-priced Western food around town are Beijing's several Russian restaurants. A few are scattered near Ritan Park area, the town's first is next door to the zoo, and just off Ghost Street is a strong relative newcomer. All offer Russian staples, from borscht soup and brown bread to dishes chock full of cream and potatoes. And plenty of real Russian vodka, of course. It may not be the favorite fare of cardiologists, but there is no denying the ability of a solid Russian meal to pleasurably fight off the winter chills.

Number One Russian

Is this the best Russian restaurant in town? It'll take some beating, that's for sure. If you're used to the variable fare available around Ritan park, the reliably delicious items on the menu at **Traktirr** will come as a pleasant surprise. The restaurant itself is obviously not too worried about its status, foregoing even the traditional sign outside identifying itself. Indeed, it's quite hard to find, tucked away on a small road running parallel to Dongzhimeimei near the Russian embassy, yet it's always packed and booking ahead is recommended.

Inside it's nice and cozy, with wood furniture all round. There's something reassuring about the fact that a lot of Russians come here, as you'll be able to tell from voices at the bar and the closely packed tables.

The place to start is with the salads and a couple of bowls of the delicious brown bread. The beetroot and carrot salads are smooth, fresh and crunchy, pleasingly mixed with dollops of sour cream, but perhaps the best is the improbably titled "Man's prank", a kind of potato salad with pork and radish mixed in. The borscht is a good choice on cold winter evenings, particularly if washed down

with the reasonably priced vodka (10 yuan for a generous measure of Stolichnaya). Lighter drinkers can down the superb, but slightly pricey, Baltika beer available in different alcohol levels (25 yuan per 500 ml can).

For main courses, ask the staff what's good on the night, because when the fish is good, it's fantastic. There's a basic version of fried trout for 48 yuan, but it's worth shelling out 62 yuan for the deluxe version under the "Dishes for Banquet" section of the menu. Here, a couple of items below the roast suckling pig, you'll see roast trout stuffed with mushrooms. It's enough to feed two, but single diners will find it hard to stop from picking clean the deliciously tender fish covered with mushrooms, onions and cream. The more modest Russian-style skewered salmon is also superb, perfectly cooked and presented with simple but good vegetables.

The meat options are predictably extensive, ranging from beefsteak to the inevitable Chicken Kiev. The fried spring chicken is delicious, if a little insubstan-

tial, and braised beef in a crock and braised lamb (actually in a crock, as opposed to the beef) are rich, filling and tasty, thanks to the presence of pastry and cream. Though surely heavy, main course portions are reasonable and not too intimidating. Still, you're unlikely to have any room left for desert.



Traktirr's ample bar

One of the few disappointing items is the bland Russian-style dumplings. But when everything else is so good, it seems churlish to complain.

Traktirr may be some distance from the traditional Russian district of Beijing around Ritan Park, but it stands head and shoulders over the restaurants you'll find there. It feels like the real deal, and offers superbly cooked food available at prices far lower than those of similar dishes in more upmarket western restaurants in Beijing.

Where: 1a Xiyangguan Hutong, Beizhong Jie, Dongzhimeimei Dajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 11:30 am - 11 pm **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person **Tel:** 6403 4835

Stuck in Time

The deadweight, state-run effect is obvious at the **Moscow Restaurant**, but it's worth a trip for several reasons, perhaps for sightseeing in particular. The restaurant is part of an impressive complex of buildings built by the PRC's Soviet brethren, but it all seems less forbidding and somewhat quaint these days. The acres of marble and lush interior decorations still have a certain style. And fans of the film *In the Heat of Sun* will be eager to relive the famous scene where they're all gathered in the restaurant, even though the Cultural Revolution era Mao mural is long gone. Here you'll find all the Russian staples such as borscht and Chicken Kiev, but they're all somewhat ordinary and the vegetable dishes are reminiscent of English cooking from 30 years ago: overcooked and tasteless. One upside is quality draft Tsingtao beer for 20 yuan per pint, enticement enough after a day of trekking around the nearby zoo or beautiful Purple Bamboo Park.

Where: 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, inside Beijing Exhibition Center, Xicheng **Open:** 11 am - 2 pm, 5-9 pm **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person **Tel:** 6835 4454

Recipe: Potato Salad

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups soft cheese, crumbled
10 potatoes, cleaned and boiled
1/3 cup olive oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
3/4 cup spring onions, finely chopped
10 black olives, pitted
4 tbs wine vinegar
3 tbs dill, finely chopped
salt and black pepper to taste

Method

Dice cooled potatoes into cubes, then toss with olive oil and garlic. Place in refrigerator to cool for 15 minutes.

Add cheese and spring onions and drizzle with vinegar. Add dill, olives, as well as salt and pepper to taste, gently. Let rest in fridge for at least another hour to allow flavors to meld.



Photos by Wang Yumeng

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A new and very nice apartment near Dongzhimen, close to Russian embassy, is ready for lease. 8,000 yuan per month. 153 square meters, 3 bedrooms, 1 living room, kitchen, etc. The apartment can be used for family living or business office. Contact: 13366082266, 13521038347 (English)

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One set almost new lady's Cougar golf clubs complete with golf bag (only 7 iron has been used) – \$350; One set men's Cougar golf clubs complete with golf bag – \$350. Discount for purchase of both. Contact Wong at 13801312043

Language Exchange

A Chinese major who has learned English for two years now wants to find a language partner. I can be a good tour guide and show you around Beijing. Email: cicy1568@yahoo.com.cn

A girl, graduated from University of International Business and Economics one year ago, is now looking for an English native speaker as a language partner. Email: bbnning@126.com

Professional Help

Carol, a college graduate, kind hearted and smart girl, well speaking English, would like to find a full time or part time job on weekdays or weekends teaching foreign children Chinese or taking care of foreign children. Email: lunasea8262@sina.com, 13811719799

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Music



Closing Ceremony of Seventh Beijing International Music Festival

The Seventh Beijing International Music Festival comes to a grand ending with a last concert in which famed conductor Chares Dutoit will lead the UBS Verbier Festival Orchestra. The UBS Verbier Festival Orchestra is made up of over 100 musicians from 35 countries. Solo violinist Maxim Vengerov has played since he was five years old and won the Junior Wieniawski Competition in Poland at age 11.

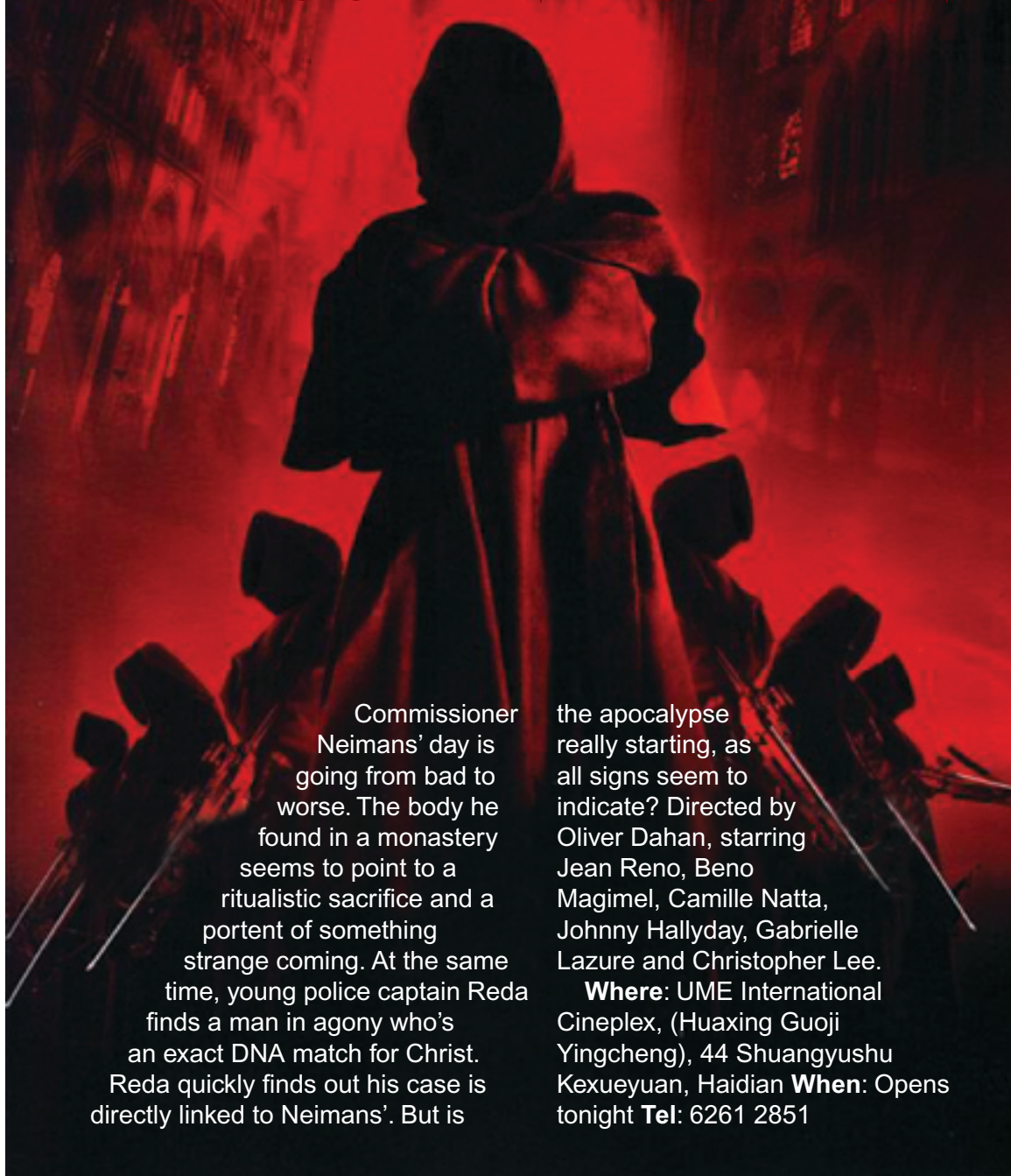
Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** Tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6550 1188 ext. 5126

Moon Reflected in Two Springs – Song Fei and Students



Famed *erhu* player Song Fei has played the instrument since age six and learned from her father, Song Guangsheng, a composer and professor at the Tianjin Conservatory of Music. Song has been performing since 1976, has travelled to many countries and regions, including Sweden, France, Japan and Hong Kong, and won many awards.

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park **When:** Saturday, noon **Admission:** 10-60 yuan **Tel:** 6593 0299

CRIMSON RIVERS 2:
ANGELS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Commissioner Neimans' day is going from bad to worse. The body he found in a monastery seems to point to a ritualistic sacrifice and a portent of something strange coming. At the same time, young police captain Reda finds a man in agony who's an exact DNA match for Christ. Reda quickly finds out his case is directly linked to Neimans'. But is

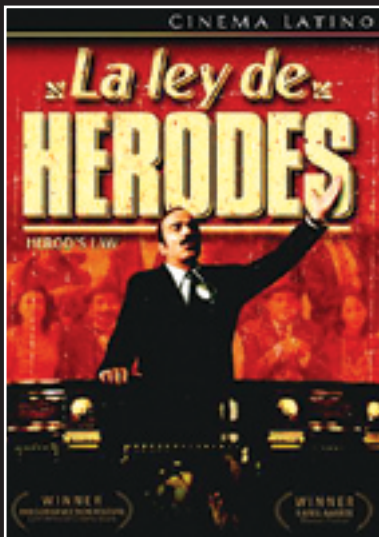
the apocalypse really starting, as all signs seem to indicate? Directed by Oliver Dahan, starring Jean Reno, Beno Magimel, Camille Natta, Johnny Hallyday, Gabrielle Lazure and Christopher Lee. **Where:** UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** Opens tonight **Tel:** 6261 2851

Movies

Herod's Law

Directed by Luis Estrada Rodriguez, starring Delia Casanova, Juan Carlos Colombo and Alex Cox. After a corrupt mayor is killed by peasants, poor janitor Juan Vargas is appointed the new mayor of a desert town in central Mexico. Although he tries to bring the motto of the ruling party to town – modernity, peace and progress – he realizes soon that there's nothing to do against corruption...

Where: Mexican Embassy, 5 Sanlitun Dongjie, Sanlitun **When:** November 10, 7:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2244



The Hundred Steps

Directed by Marco Tullio Giordana, starring Luigi Lo Cascio, Paolo Briguglia and Luigi Maria Burruano. The movie is the story of Peppino Impastato, a young left-wing activist that in the late 1970s repeatedly denounced the Mafia using a small local radio station, with the arm of irony. In 1978, Peppino was killed in an explosion. The police archived the case as an accident or suicide, but his friends never accepted the explanation...

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** November 11, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Explosive City (Di Liu Ji)

Directed by Sam Leong, starring Simon Yan, Alex Fong, Hisako Shirata and Sonny Chiba. Two cops pursue a young Japanese woman, trained since childhood to be a professional killer, who has assassinated a Hong Kong official...

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** Now playing **Tel:** 6261 2851



Performances



Kingdom of the Wind

A Chinese musical with legendary, yet still contemporary themes, performed by young, promising actors at the China National Drama Theatre.

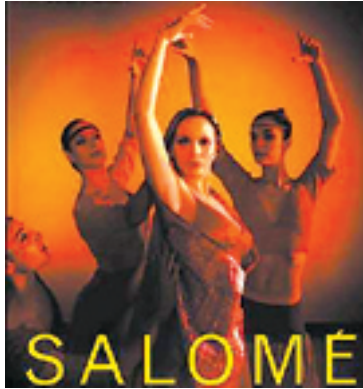
Where: Bei Theatre, Beibing-masi Hutong, Jiadaokou Dajie **When:** Tonight, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 40-280 yuan **Tel:** 6406 0175



Peking Opera

In a move to encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of Peking Opera by college students, postgraduates of the Academy of Chinese Traditional Operas will stage the Peking Opera *The Women Generals of the Yang Family*.

Where: Peking University Concert Hall, Peking University, Haidian **When:** Saturday, 7 pm **Admission:** 10-60 yuan **Tel:** 6275 9637



Spanish Dance Salomé

Carlos Saura, one of Spain's top choreographers, directs this musical treatment of the Biblical legend of Salome, who asked for the head of John the Baptist in return for a dance...

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** November 11 and 12, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 200 -1,600 yuan **Tel:** 6550 1188 ext. 5126

Service

Italian Cuisine Week

Indulge in a weeks-worth of exquisite Italian fare cooked by two master chefs from Italy. On show will be fresh native seasonal fruits and vegetables, herbs and Mediterranean seafood.

Where: Shangri-La Hotel Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian **When:** Today till November 11, 6 am – midnight **Tel:** 6841 2211 ext. 2715



Sport

Cup of China Figure Skating

Beijing is the fourth stop in this season's figure skating Grand Prix, drawing 46 skaters, all ranked within the top 30 in the world, from 17 countries and regions.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 5 Baishiqiao, Xizhimenwai, Haidian **When:** November 11, 4:30 pm **Admission:** 20-80 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552 ext. 8235



Exhibitions

Song of Living – Solo Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Zhou Bichu

Painter Zhou Bichu was one of China's most famous artists of the early 20th century. He traveled to France in the 1920s to study painting, and his art shows clear influence of Impressionism. But he also loved Chinese artistic traditions, and his work has a mixed Chinese and Western feeling.

Where: Soka Art Center, B-101, Tianhai Business Plaza, Dongcheng **When:** till November 18, 10 am – 5 pm (closed Mondays) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8401 2377

Young Girl's World

An exhibition of oil paintings by nine-year-old Yang Chuanbaixue, a gifted young artist who first picked up a paintbrush at the age of one and started winning prizes the next year. Her oil paintings are characterized by a fluid style and wide use of strong colors.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1 E, Huaweili, Enjoy Paradise Chaoyang **When:** November 8-14, 9:30 am – 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

Made by Nature

In photographic studies spanning the past ten years, Robert F. Hammerstiel has undertaken to get to the bottom of everyday culture in the West. In this exhibition, he presents a selection of commonplace manufactured items – little plastic trinkets, all made in China and available cheap throughout the Western world.

Where: L.A Gallery, Laodong Renmin Wenhua Gong **When:** till November 12, 10 am – 5 pm (closed Monday) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6526 5045

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HBO	
5 Friday	
Jaws 2	11:35 pm
6 Saturday	
A Man Apart	9 pm
7 Sunday	
The Sweetest Thing	10:55 pm
8 Monday	
Mars Attacks!	9 pm
9 Tuesday	
Casino	11:25 pm
10 Wednesday	
I.Q.	9 pm
11 Thursday	
Sin	10:45 pm
CCTV-9	
Monday – Friday	
Around China	6:30 am
Culture Express	8:30 am
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	11:30 am
Culture Express	2:30 pm
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	5:30 pm
Dialogue	7:30 pm
News Updates /	
Asia Today	8 pm
Sports Scene	11:15 pm
Saturday	
Travelogue	9:30 am
Center Stage	11:30 am
Sunday	
Sports Weekend	10 am
Documentary	10:30 am
This Week	12:30 am
China Radio International 91.5 FM	
Monday – Friday	
Easy FM Afternoon	2-7 pm
Fun in Beijing	5-5:30 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Saturday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Euro Hit 40	12:05-1 pm
Musique Sans Frontières	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Sunday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Jazz Beat	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

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By Zhang Jianzhong

PARADISE
FOR
FILMMAKERS

Shapotou Scenic Zone

By Peng Juan

A sparsely-populated, ancient land covering 66,400 square kilometers, Ningxia is a miniature of the beautiful and diverse landscapes and cultures of western China, from the boundless golden deserts to the lush primitive forests of the Helan Mountains and from mysterious ancient ruins to rustic Hui customs.

In the vast desert is a jade-green lake, where thick reedy marshes sway in the breeze, fish swim in the water and great flocks of birds fly freely in the high sky.

Since the 1980s, some 60 movies have been shot here, including *The Herdsman* (*Mumaren*), *Red Sorghum* (*Honggaoliang*), *Ballad of the Huanghe River* (*Huanghe Juelian*), and *The Story of the Pilgrimage to the West* (*Dahua Xiyou*), which have won a raft of prizes at both domestic and international film festivals.

Film City

The evening of September 19 saw Yinchuan, capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, subject to some unaccustomed attention when fashionably dressed stars and filmmakers from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan gathered for two of China's most prestigious film awards – the Golden Rooster and the Hundred Flowers.

Xibu Yingshicheng (Western Film and Television City), the only film set in China with its own original ancient fort, is situated in the desert 30 kilometers west of Yinchuan.

Zhenbei Fort was a frontier fortress during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and has served as a film set since the 1920s. In 1992, Zhang Xianliang, the author of *Half of Man is Woman* and *Grass Soup*, established Xibu Yingshicheng, giving a new lease of life to the ancient fort, which had already served as the location for such internationally acclaimed films as Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* in 1980.

Most travelers, however, will be more impressed by the beauty of some of the more off the beaten track sights and save their film for shots of camels striding over sand dunes, hiking through mountainous areas, camping in the deep woods and rafting the turbulent Yellow River.

Western Xia Tombs

The Western Xia Tombs lie in the desert grassland at the eastern foot of the Helan Mountains, 35 kilometers west of Yinchuan. Over an area of 50 square kilometers, there are nine tombs of kings, as well as over 140 companion tombs of imperial family members and officials, making it among the largest and most intact imperial burial sites in China.

The Western Xia kingdom (1038-1227) disappeared mysteriously in the 11th century, leaving behind little else but the tombs.

The main tombs are as large and spacious as the Ming



Western Film and Television City

Tombs in Beijing, however in contrast to the wood and stone Ming structures, the Western Xia tombs are made of earth and brick. Each one is an independent architectural complex more than 100,000 square meters in area, with four corner towers, watchtowers, pavilions housing stone tablets, a sacrificial hall and a coffin platform, although most of these buildings are today virtually unrecognizable.

Invading Mongolian cavalry in 1227 left most of the tombs in ruins. Today, the most striking remaining structures are the conical "oriental pyramids," mysterious evidence of a long-gone civilization.

Helan Shan

The Helan Mountains (Helan Shan) separate the Yinchuan Plain and the Alxa Plateau. It is said the mountain range was once entirely covered with lush forest. Famed for its beauty and remoteness, Helan Shan has long been a symbol of the northern frontiers, and is another popular location for film makers.

The most ideal "studio" is the Suyukou Pass State Forest Park 40 kilometers northwest of Yinchuan. Wave upon wave of trees stretch as far as the eye can see, verdant and luxuriant all year round. In spring, fragrant lilacs and wild flowers attract hordes of butterflies. In summer, the snow-capped mountaintops stand in stark contrast to the blue sky and green hills. In autumn and winter, water subsides and stones emerge. Grotesque natural stone sculptures, rich scenery of valleys and gorges, running red deer and bounding blue sheep create an exquisite scene for photographers.

The carvings on the cliffs, bold and vivid, are hailed as an ancient wonder. Created by the northern nomads more than 5,000 years ago, they run the



The 108 pagodas at Qingtongxia



Western Xia tombs

Photos by Imaginechina

gamut from portraits, totems and astronomy signs to scenes of hunting, tending sheep, war and dance.

Sand Lake

The Sand Lake area is a popular holiday spot 56 kilometers northwest of Yinchuan. The 895-hectare lake is surrounded by 1,800 hectares of marshes and 2,000 hectares of desert and semi-drifting sand dunes, set off by the lofty Helan Shan in the distance.

The desert and brocade-like lake create a picturesque contrast; blue ripples on the surface of the lake set off by golden waves of desert dunes.

The lake is a haven for birds and rich in marine life. In early summer, newly growing reeds form a bamboo-like screen around the lake shore, swaying gently and gracefully in the wind. The lake is home to 1 million birds of 198 species, including white cranes, gray storks and swans. In spring, large flocks of migratory birds come to breed in the reed marshes. In summer and autumn, birds fill the sky, creating a cacophony of song.

Qingtongxia Pagodas

Qingtong Gorge is located about 60 kilometers south of Yinchuan on the Yellow River.

While the gorge is not a spectacular sight in itself, on the mountain slope of the western bank stand the 108 pagodas, originally built during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The 108 pagodas are one of the locations used in the martial arts film *Shaolin Temple* (*Shaolinsi*).

Arranged in twelve rows in the shape of a large equilateral triangle – tapering from one to nineteen, the pagoda complex is a Buddhist monument with a sense of enduring mystery. The white brick Lamaist pagodas feature an octagonal pedestal representing the holy Mt. Sumeru, supporting the inverted-bowl-style main body. The pagoda at the tip of the triangle on top of the slope is the largest.

The layout, style and quantity of the pagodas are quite unique, and are the source of many stories. According to Buddhist belief, there are 108 kinds of troubles and miseries in the life of human beings. To gain relief from these numerous troubles, a devout Buddhist should wear a rosary with 108 beads and says prayers 108 times in acknowledgement of man's sins.

The 108 pagodas themselves constitute a rosary, and it is said that by counting all the pagodas in one breath, one could be completely relieved from all kinds of troubles.

Near the 108 Pagodas is Bird Island, home to hundreds of species including white and black cranes, swans, gray storks and wild ducks, as well as the precious black swan. In spring, large flocks of migratory birds fly here to breed.

Shapotou Scenic Zone

The Shapotou Scenic Zone lies 20 kilometers from Zhongwei County in southwestern Ningxia and on the southern rim of the Tenger Desert.

The desert comes to an

abrupt stop here where it meets the Yellow River. Constrained by the river, which makes a sudden turn here, the desert is pressed into a sand dune some 200 meters high and 2,000 meters wide, with a gradient of 60 degrees. The restless Yellow River flowing by the base of the sand dune makes a rare, unforgettable sight.

Liupan Mountains

The Liupan Mountains tower over southern Guyuan County, where Ningxia meets Gansu and Shaanxi provinces.

The mountain range extends over 200 kilometers and rises to about 3,000 meters. An important watershed in northern China, the mountains are the source of the Jing, Qingshui and Hulu rivers.

This area is a green island on the loess plateau, with lush vegetation and beautiful scenery. The alpine forest covers some 26,000 hectares. Known as a vast botanical and zoological gene bank, the mountains boast 788 species of alpine plants, of which 155 species have a high economic value, and 206 species of wild animals, including 158 bird species, 39 mammal species, 5 amphibian species, and 4 reptile species.

The east section of the ancient Silk Road passes through this area. Genghis Khan stationed his troops here when attacking the Western Xia Kingdom and later died here. In 1935 when the Red Army passed through during the Long March, Chairman Mao Zedong wrote a poem titled *Liupan Mountains*. Today, a pavilion stands here to commemorate the Long March.

This area is densely inhabited by the Hui minority group and scattered with many mosques and buildings featuring Islamic style architecture.

In most of the above mentioned places, yurts, camels, boats and motorboats are usually available for hire.

Getting there:

Yinchuan: Return airfare from Beijing to Yinchuan is 1,100-2,200 yuan. The train takes 20 hours, a hard sleeper ticket costs 165 yuan. Nearby sites include Zhenbei Fort, the Western Xia Mausoleum, Helan Shan and Sand Lake.

Zhongwei County: Located in southwestern Ningxia, close to the Tenger Desert.

Transportation is convenient, with the Baotou-Lanzhou and Baoji-Zhongwei railways and National Highway 109 running through. The Baotou-Lanzhou Railway runs right through Shapotou Scenic Spot.

Qingtongxia: Qingtongxia has convenient transportation, with the Baotou-Lanzhou railway and National Highway 109 passing through. Take train or bus Qingtongxia from Yinchuan, and then a taxi, motor-rickshaw or bus to the 108 pagodas.

Guyuan County: Guyuan is a major traffic hub in Ningxia, on the Pingliang-Yinchuan, Xi'an-Lanzhou and Lanzhou-Yinchuan highways and the Baoji-Zhongwei railway. The Liupan Mountains are nearby.